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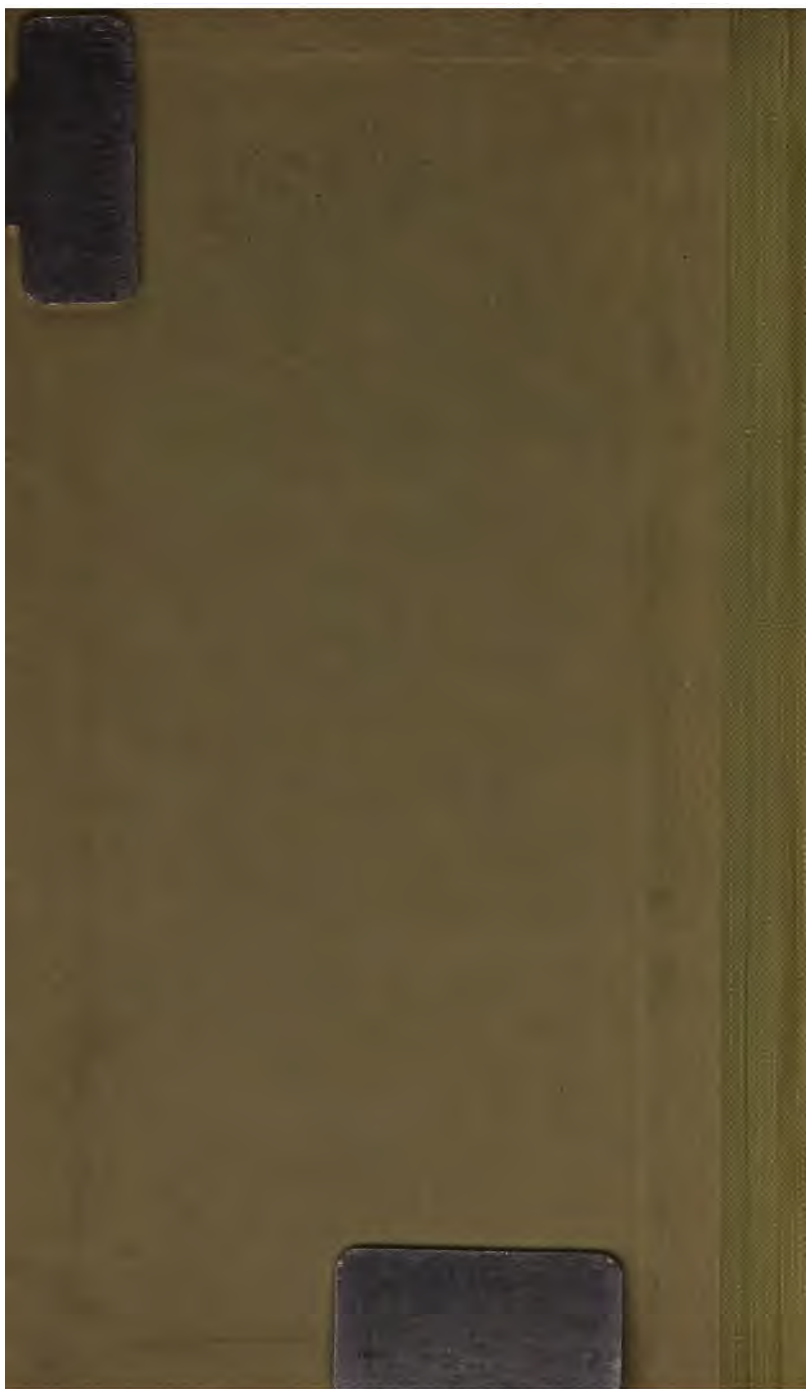
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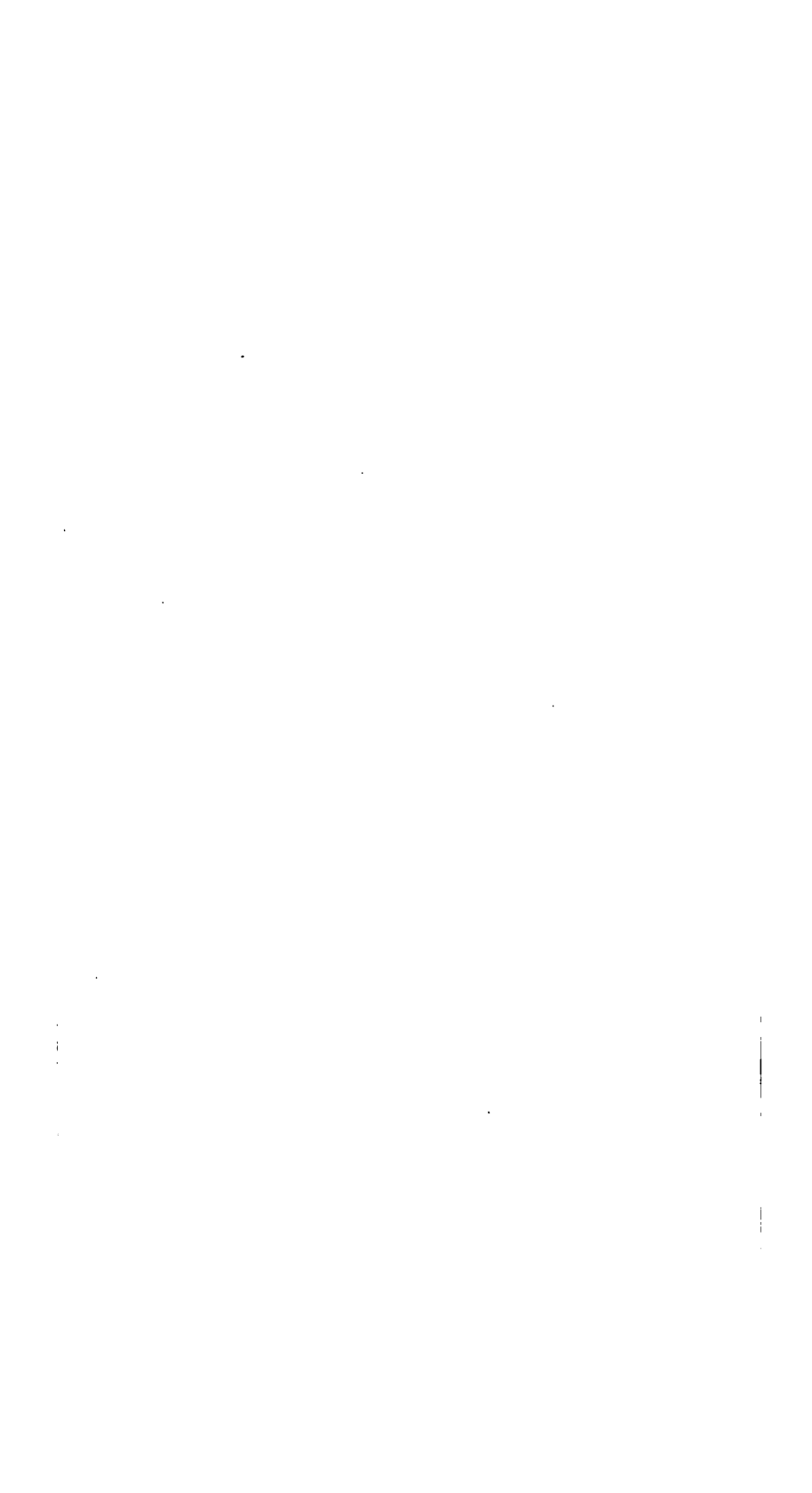


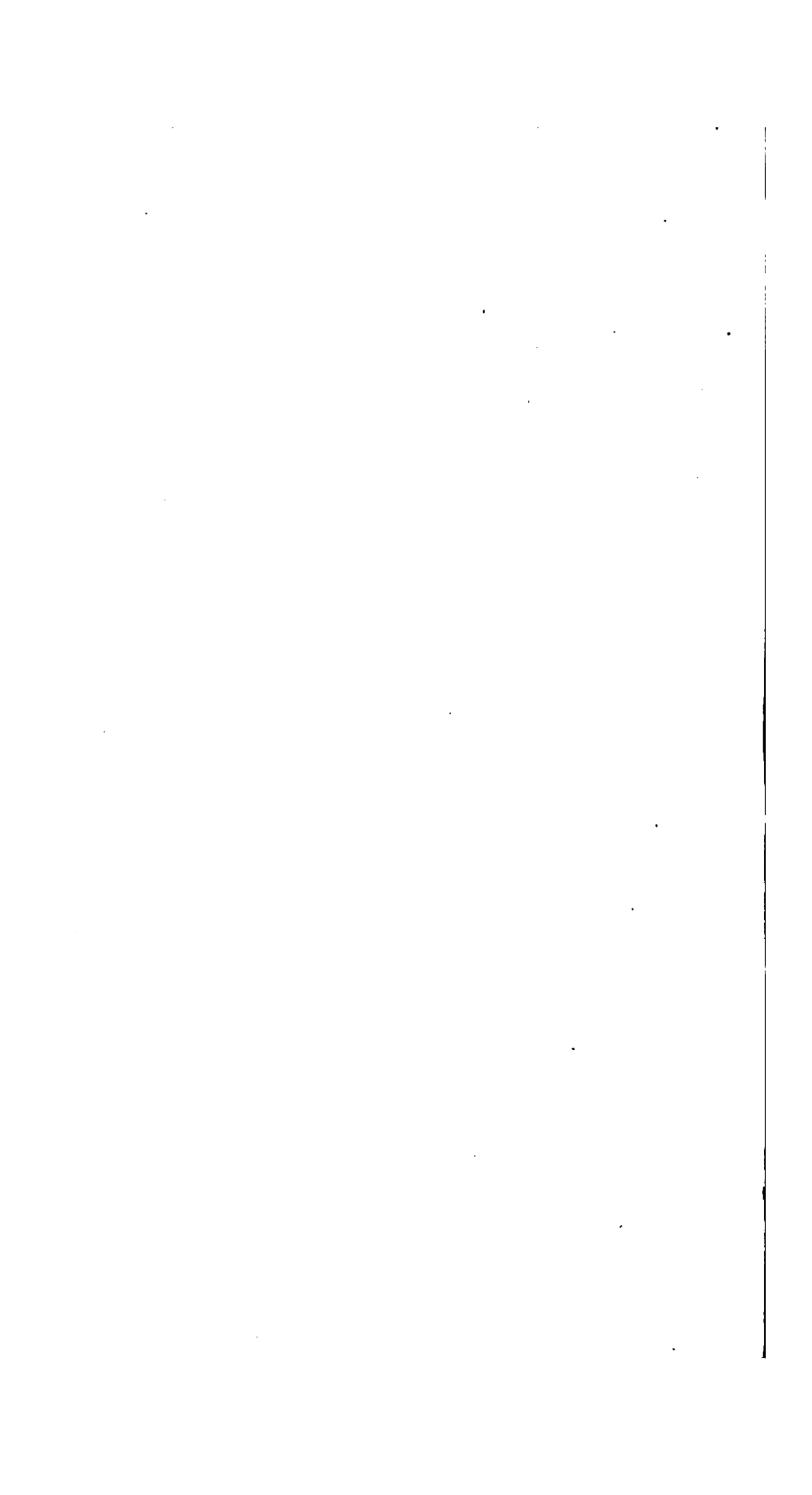
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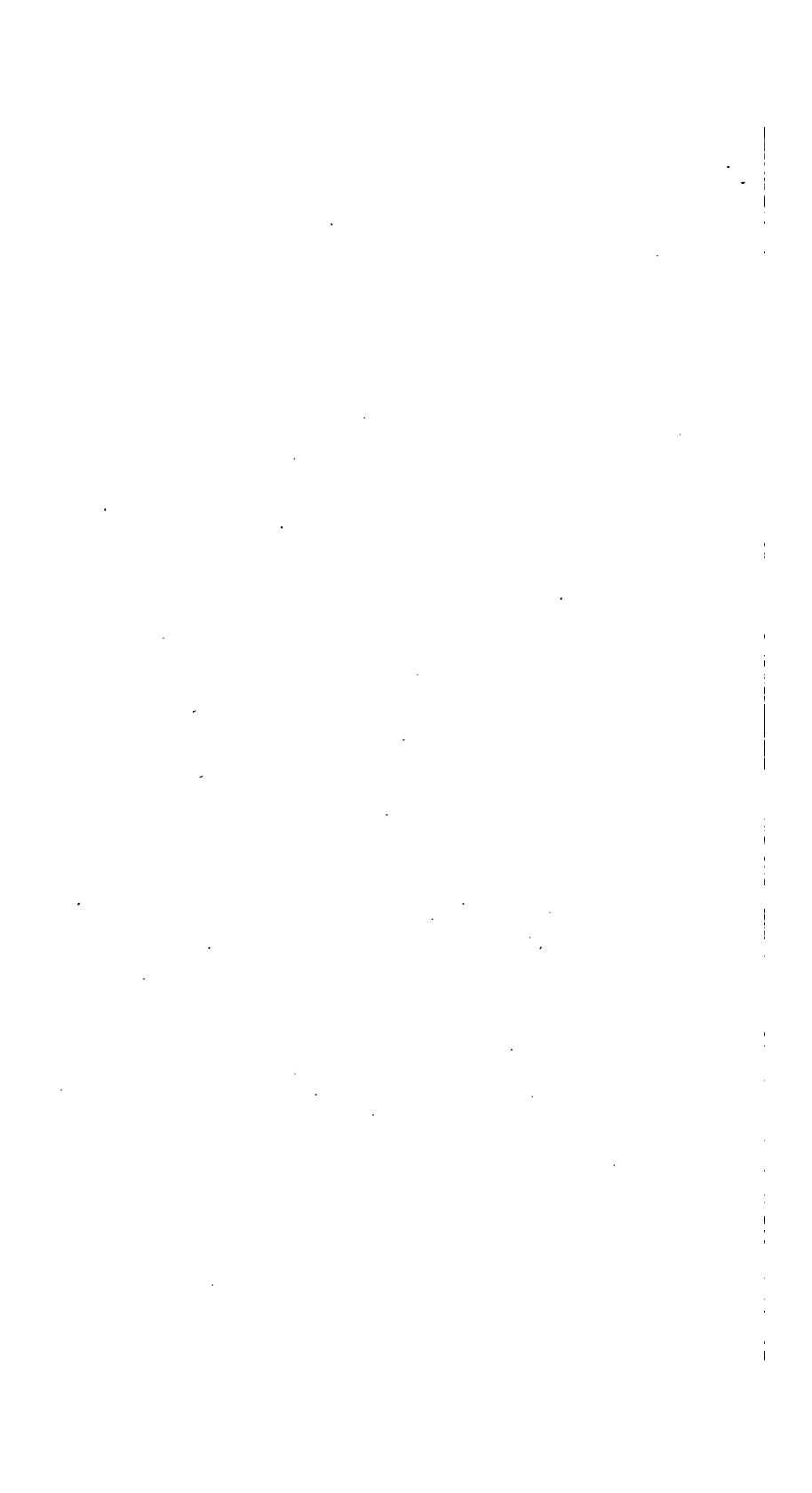
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Coleman









A CHURCH WITHOUT A BISHOP.

THE
APOSTOLICAL
AND
PRIMITIVE CHURCH,

POPULAR IN ITS GOVERNMENT, AND SIMPLE
IN ITS WORSHIP.

BY
LYMAN COLEMAN,
AUTHOR OF "ANTIQUITIES OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH."

WITH AN INTRODUCTORY ESSAY,
BY
DR. AUGUSTUS NEANDER,
PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF BERLIN.

BOSTON:
GOULD, KENDALL AND LINCOLN,
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1844 ✓

per




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P R E F A C E .

MAN is said to be a creature of circumstances. The same may be said of a book. The present, at least, is the result of a circumstance sufficiently trivial. In the year 1841, the author published, with no sectarian designs, a work on the Antiquities of the Christian Church, as a compilation from various German authors, having Augusti's Compend for its basis. This unpretending volume, however, aroused the suspicion of a certain presbyter in Philadelphia, bearing the initials H. W. D., whose practised eye and professional skill detected, as he seemed to think, a dangerous infection covertly propagated by the circulation of the book. The alarm was raised; and the public warned of their danger by a review, remarkable for the spirit and decency with which it was written, and, most of all, for its random assertions, contradicting, with an assurance seldom equalled, the plainest facts of ecclesiastical history. Finding this review every where circulated, with the admirable spirit in which it was written, the author of the work in question ventured upon a brief reply. This gave a direction to his studies which he had never contemplated; and which, with increasing diligence and interest, he has continued to pursue until the present time. The result of these inquiries is,—the following work.



For this new direction thus given to his studies, and for all the interesting incidents of his foreign travel, connected with them, the author has to offer all due acknowledgments to his old friend, the presbyter. What thanks the public may owe him, is yet to be seen in the judgment which they shall accord to the book here submitted to their examination. It is, however, in no sense presented in answer to that review. Far from it. The traveller receives his direction from any way-faring man, and goes on his journey regardless of his informant; so the author, taking his departure from an incident so trifling, has pursued his course of study, with an aim infinitely higher than that of replying to his reviewer.

The object of the author, in the following work, is to commend to the consideration of the reader the admirable simplicity of the government and worship of the primitive church, in opposition to the polity and ceremonials of the higher forms of prelacy.

In the prosecution of this object, he has sought, under the direction of the best guides, to go to the original sources, and first and chiefly to draw from them. On the constitution and government of the church none have written with greater ability, or with more extensive and searching erudition, than Mosheim, Planck, Neander and Rothe. These have been his principal reliance; and after these, a great variety of authors.

If the reader object, that the authorities cited are beyond his reach, or are recorded in a language to him unknown, the writer can only say, that he has endeavored to collect the best authorities, wherever they might be found. When embodied in the pages of the work, they are given in a translation; and, if of special importance, the original is inserted in the margin, for the examination of the scholar.

The work has been prepared with an anxious endeavor to sustain the positions advanced, by references sufficiently copious, pertinent and authoritative; and yet to guard against an ostentatious

PREFACE.

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affectation in the accumulation of authorities. Several hundred have indeed been entered in these pages ; but many more, that have fallen under the eye of the writer, have been rejected. Much labor, of which the reader probably will make small account, has been expended in an endeavor to authenticate those that are retained, and to give him an explicit direction to them. The work has been written with studied brevity, and an uniform endeavor to make it at once concise, yet complete, and suggestive of principles.

In the prosecution of these labors, the author has received much encouragement and many important suggestions, from friends, whose services he holds in grateful remembrance. For such favors he is particularly indebted to Professor Park, of the Theological Seminary in this place.

Above all, it is the author's grateful duty publicly to express his acknowledgments to Dr. Neander, not only for his Introductory Essay, but for the uniform kindness of his counsels in the preparation of the several parts of this work. The writer can say nothing to add to the reputation of this eminent scholar, distinguished alike for his private virtues, his public services, and his vast and varied erudition. He can only express his obligations for the advantages derived from the contribution and the counsels of this great historian, for which the reader, in common with the writer of the following pages, will owe his grateful acknowledgments. For the sentiments here expressed, however, the writer is alone responsible.

The translation of the Introduction was made in Berlin ; and, after a careful comparison with the original by Dr. Neander, received his unqualified approbation. It is, therefore, to be received as an authentic expression of his sentiments on the several topics to which it relates.

In the preparation of this work, the author has studiously

sought to write neither as a Congregationalist, nor as a Presbyterian, exclusively; but as the advocate of a free and popular government in the church; and of simplicity in worship, in harmony with the free spirit of the Christian religion. It is enough for the author, if the church is set free from the bondage of a prelatical hierarchy; and trained, by simple and expressive rites, to worship God in spirit and in truth. We heartily wish indeed for all true churchmen a closer conformity to the primitive pattern in government and in worship; but we have no controversy with them on these points, provided we may still be united with them in the higher principles of Christian fellowship and love. The writer has the happiness to number among the members of that communion some of his most cherished friends, to whose sentiments he would be sorry to do violence by any thing that may appear in these pages.

Indeed, the great controversy of the day is not with Protestant Episcopacy, as such; it is rather with FORMALISM. Formalism wherever seen, by whatever name it is known,—this is the great antagonist principle of spiritual Christianity. Here the church is brought to a crisis, great and fearful in prospect, and momentous, for good or for evil, in its final results. The struggle at issue is between a spiritual and a formal religion;—a religion which substitutes the outward form for the inward spirit;—a religion that exalts sacraments, ordinances and rites, into the place of Christ himself; and disguises, under the covering of imposing ceremonials, the great doctrines of the cross of Christ.


The church is at issue with this religion under the forms of high church Prelacy, 'Puseyism,' and Popery. The present struggle began in England; but when or where or how it will end, who can tell? Dr. Pusey himself declares that on the issue of it, "hangs the destiny of the church of England." The Tractarians all avow,—“that two schemes of doctrine, the

Genevan and the Catholic, are probably for the last time struggling within that church." But the conflict is not confined to England. The signs of the times, every where darkly portentous, presage a similar conflict to the church of Christ universally.

In this eventful crisis we are urgently pressed to a renewed examination of the apostolical and primitive polity of the church, in government and in worship; for under cover of these the warfare of Formalism is now waged. These are the prominent points, both of attack and of defence, to which the eye of the minister, the theological student, and the intelligent Christian of every name, should be strongly turned. Let them fall back on that spiritual Christianity which Christ and his apostles taught. Let them, in doctrine, in discipline, and in worship, entrench themselves within the strongholds of this religion; and here, in calm reliance upon the great Captain of our salvation, let them await the issue of the contest.

Hitherto the great body of the people have been left to gather up information upon this branch of religious knowledge as they could; and the most have been content with a blind acquiescence in the customs of their own church. A due degree of knowledge on this subject is apparently the lot of very few of our leading men, and by no means the property generally of clergymen and theological students.

To what purpose is it now, just to follow the history of the church, century by century, through the recital of her sufferings? The times are changed, and a corresponding change is required in the study of ecclesiastical history. This is chiefly important, for existing exigencies, to illustrate the usages, the rites, the government of the church, and the perversion of these to promote the ends of bigotry, intolerance, and superstition. Besides, we have seen, for some years past, an influence stealing silently upon the public mind, and alluring many young clergymen from the fold of their fathers;—an influence to be counteracted



by a better understanding of our own government and worship. Bishop Griswold stated in 1841, that of "two hundred and eighty persons ordained by him; *two hundred and seven* came from other denominations." And another bishop says, "From the most accurate investigation that can be made, I am led to believe, that about *three hundred* clergymen and licentiates of other denominations, have, within the last *thirty years*, sought the ministerial commission from the hands of bishops of that church; and, that at least *two-thirds* were not originally, by education, Episcopalians, but have come from other folds." These facts afford matter for serious inquiry. These three hundred were not originally Episcopalians. Were they, "*by education*," any thing else? Would they have strayed away in such numbers from their own fold, had they been duly instructed in the principles of that order to which they originally belonged?

The author is deeply sensible of the magnitude and difficulty of the work which he has undertaken; and with no affected modesty, avows the unfeigned diffidence with which he commends it to the public. Would it were worthier, and better fitted for the great end proposed by it. But he has done what he could, and finds his reward in the consciousness of having labored honestly in a righteous cause, and in the hope of doing something for the promotion of that religious system which shall enable the true worshippers to worship the Father in spirit and in truth. Such a religious system, he believes most firmly must ever find its truest expression in rites of worship few and simple, and in a government administered in every part and every particular by the people;—in a ritual without a prayer-book; and a church without a bishop.

Andover, February, 1844.

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INTRODUCTION,

BY

DR. AUGUSTUS NEANDER,

PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF BERLIN, CONSISTORIAL
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IN compliance with the request of my worthy friend, the Rev. Mr. Coleman, I am happy to accompany his proposed work on the Constitution and Worship of the apostolical and primitive church with some preliminary remarks. I regard it as one of the remarkable signs of the times, that Christians, separated from each other by land and by sea, by language and government, are becoming more closely united in the consciousness that they are only different members of one universal church, grounded and built on the rock Christ Jesus. And it is with the hope of promoting this catholic union, that I gladly improve this opportunity to address my Christian brethren beyond the waters on some important subjects of common interest to the church of Christ.

This is not the proper place to express in detail, and to defend my own views upon the controverted topics which, as I have reason to expect from the respected author, will be the subject of an extended, thorough and impartial

examination in his proposed work. My own sentiments have already been expressed, in a work which, I am happy to learn, is offered to the English reader in a translation by my friend, the Rev. Mr. Ryland, of Northampton, in England.¹ I have only time and space, in this place, briefly to express the results of former inquiries, which, with the reasons for them, have on other occasions already been given to the public.

It is of the utmost importance to keep ever in view the difference between the economy of the Old Testament and that of the New. The neglect of this has given rise to the grossest errors, and to divisions, by which those who ought to be united together in the bonds of Christian love, have been sundered from each other. In the Old Testament, every thing relating to the kingdom of God was estimated by *outward forms*, and promoted by specific *external rites*. In the New, every thing is made to depend upon what is *internal* and *spiritual*. Other foundation, as the apostle Paul has said, can no man lay than that is laid. Upon this the Christian church at first was grounded, and upon this alone, in all time to come, must it be reared anew and compacted together. Faith in Jesus of Nazareth, the Saviour of the world, and union with him, a participation in that salvation which cometh through him,—this is that inward principle, that unchangeable foundation, on which

¹ History of the Planting and Training of the Christian Church, by the Apostles, by Dr. A. NEANDER, Ordinary Professor of Theology, in the University of Berlin, Consistorial Counsellor; translated from the third edition, by J. E. Ryland.

the Christian church essentially rests. But whenever, instead of making the existence of the church to depend on this inward principle alone, the necessity of some outward form is asserted as an indispensable means of grace, we readily perceive that the purity of its character is impaired. The spirit of the Old Testament is commingled with that of the New. Neither Christ nor the apostles, have given any unchangeable law on the subject. Where two or three are gathered together in my name, says Christ, there am I in the midst of them. This coming together in his name, he assures us, alone renders the assembly well pleasing in his sight, whatever be the different forms of government under which his people meet.

The apostle Paul says, indeed, Eph. 4: 11, that Christ gave to the church certain offices, through which he operated with his Spirit, and its attendants gifts. But assuredly Paul did not mean to say that Christ, during his abode on earth, appointed these offices in the church, or authorized the form of government that was necessarily connected with them. All the offices here mentioned, with the single exception of that of the apostles, were instituted by the apostles themselves, after our Lord's ascension. In making these appointments, they acted, as they did in every thing else, only as the organs of Christ. Paul, therefore, very justly ascribes to Christ himself what was done by the apostles in this instance as his agents. But the apostles themselves have given no law, requiring that any such form of government as is indicated in this passage should be perpetual. Under the guidance of the Spirit of

God, they gave the church this particular organization, which, while it was best adapted to the circumstances and relations of the church at that time, was also best suited to the extension of the churches in their peculiar condition, and for the development of the inward principles of their communion. But forms may change with every change of circumstances. Many of the offices mentioned in that passage, either were entirely unknown at a later period, or existed in relations one to another entirely new.²

Whenever at a later period, also, any form of church government has arisen out of a series of events according to the direction of divine providence, and is organized and

²One peculiar office, that of the prophets, in process of time ceased in the church, while something analogous to the gift of prophecy still remained; indeed it might be easily shown that the prophetic office continued at that early period, so long as it was necessary for the establishment of the Christian church, under its peculiar exigencies and relations. Pastors and teachers are mentioned in this passage, in the same connection. Their office, which related to the government of particular churches, is distinguished from that of those who had been mentioned before, and whose immediate object was the extension of the Christian church in general. And yet a distinction is also made between these pastors and teachers, inasmuch as the qualifications for the outward government of the church, *κυβερνήσεις*, were different from those which were requisite for the guidance of the church by the preaching of the word, *διδασκαλία*. The first belonged especially to the presbyters or bishops who stood at the head of the organization for the outward government of the church. Certain it is, at least, that they did not all possess the gift of teaching as *διδάσκαλοι*, *teachers*. On the other hand, there may have been persons endowed with the gift of teaching, and qualified thus to be teachers, who still belonged not to the class of presbyters. The relations of these offices to one another seem not to have been the same in all stages of the development of the apostolic churches.

governed with regard to the Lord's will, he may be said, himself, to have established it, and to operate through it, by his Spirit; without which nothing pertaining to the church can prosper. The great principles which are given by the apostle, in the passage before us, for the guidance of the church,—these, and these only, remain unchangeably the same; because they are immediately connected with the nature of the Christian church, as a spiritual community. All else is mutable. The form of the church remained not the same, even through the whole course of the apostolic age, from the first descent of the Spirit, on the day of Pentecost, to the death of John the apostle. Particular forms of church government may be more or less suited to the nature of the Christian church; and we may add, no one is absolutely perfect, neither are all alike good under all circumstances. Would then that all, in their strivings after forms of church government, would abide fast by those which they believe to be best adapted to promote their own spiritual edification, and which they may have found, by experience, to be best suited to the wants of their own Christian community. Only let them not seek to impose upon all Christians any one form as indispensably necessary. Only let them remember, that the upbuilding of the church of Christ may be carried on under other forms also, and that the same Spirit, on which the existence of the church depends, can as truly operate in other churches as in their own. Would that Congregationalists, Presbyterians and Episcopalians, Calvinists and Lutherans, would abide by that only unchangeable founda-

tion which Christ has laid. Would that on such a foundation, which no man can lay, they would meet as brethren in Christ, acknowledging each other as members of one catholic church, and organs of the same Spirit, co-operating together for the promotion of the great ends indicated by the apostle Paul in Eph. 4: 13—16.

It must, indeed, be of great importance to examine impartially the relations of the apostolical church, for at this time the Spirit of Christ, through the apostles, wrought in its purest influence, by which means the mingling of foreign elements was prevented in the development of this system of ecclesiastical polity. In this respect we must all admit that the apostolical church commends itself to us as a model of church government. But, in the first place, let us remember, agreeably to what has already been said, that not all the forms of church government which were adapted to the exigencies of the church at this early period, can be received as patterns for the church at other times; neither can the imitation be pressed too far. Let us remember, that it is only that same Spirit which is imparted to us through the intervention of the apostles, which, at all times, and under all possible relations, will direct to the most appropriate and most efficient form of government, if, in humility and sincerity, we surrender ourselves up to its teaching and guidance. And secondly, let us remember, that, after true and faithful inquiry on these subjects, men may honestly differ in their views on those minor points, without interrupting the higher communion of faith and love.

In the apostolical church there was one office which bears no resemblance to any other, and to which none can be made to conform. This is the office of the apostles. They stand as the medium of communication between Christ and the whole Christian church, to transmit his word and his Spirit through all ages. In this respect the church must ever continue to acknowledge her dependence upon them, and to own their rightful authority. Their authority and power can be delegated to none other. But the service which the apostles themselves sought to confer, was to transmit to men the word and the Spirit of the Lord, and, by this means, to establish independent Christian communities. These communities, when once established, they refused to hold in a state of slavish dependence upon themselves. Their object was, in the Spirit of the Lord, to make the churches free, and independent of their guidance. To the churches their language was, "Ye beloved, ye are made free, be ye the servants of no man." The churches were taught to govern themselves. All the members were made to co-operate together as organs of one Spirit, in connection with which spiritual gifts were imparted to each as he might need. Thus they, whose prerogative it was to rule among the brethren, demeaned themselves as the servants of Christ and his church. They acted in the name of Christ and his church, as the organs of that Spirit with which all were inspired, and from which they derived the consciousness of their mutual Christian fellowship.

The brethren chose their own-officers from among themselves. Or if, in the first organization of the churches,



their officers were appointed by the apostles, it was with the approbation of the members of the same. The general concerns of the church were managed by the apostles in connection with their brethren in the church, to whom they also addressed their epistles.

The earliest constitution of the church was modelled, for the most part, after that religious community with which it stood in closest connection, and to which it was most assimilated, the Jewish synagogue. This, however, was so modified as to conform to the nature of the Christian community, and to the new and peculiar spirit with which it was animated. Like the synagogue, the church was governed by an associated body of men appointed for this purpose.

The name of *presbyters*, which was appropriated to this body, was derived from the Jewish synagogue. But in the Gentile churches, formed by the apostle Paul, they took the name of *ἐπίσκοποι*, *bishops*, a term more significant of their office in the language generally spoken by the members of these churches. The name of *presbyters* denoted the dignity of their office. That of *bishops*, on the other hand, was expressive rather of the nature of their office, *ἐπισκοπεῖν τὴν ἐκκλησίαν*, *to take the oversight of the church*. Most certainly no other distinction originally existed between them. But, in process of time, some one, in the ordinary course of events, would gradually obtain the pre-eminence over his colleagues, and by reason of that peculiar oversight which he exercised over the whole community, might come to be designated by the name *ἐπίσκοπος*, *bishop*, which was originally applied to

them all indiscriminately. The constant tumults from within and from without, which agitated the church in the time of the apostles, may have given to such a one opportunity to exercise his influence the more efficiently; so that, at such a time, the controlling influence of one in this capacity may have been very salutary to the church. This change in the relation of the presbyters to each other was not the same in all the churches, but varied according to their different circumstances. It may have been as early as the latter part of the life of John, when he was sole survivor of the other apostles, that one, as president of this body of presbyters, was distinguished by the name of *ἐπίσκοπος*, *bishop*. There is, however, no evidence that the apostle himself introduced this change; much less, that he authorized it as a perpetual ordinance for the future. Such an ordinance is in direct opposition to the spirit of that apostle.³

³ In the angels of the churches in the seven epistles of the Apocalypse, I cannot recognize the *שְׁלִיחַי צְבָר* of the Jewish synagogue transferred to the Christian church. The application appears to me to be altogether arbitrary. Nor again can I discover in the angel of the church, the bishop, addressed as the representative of this body of believers. How much must we assume as already proved, which yet is entirely without evidence, in assigning to this early period the rise of such a monarchical system of government, that the bishop alone can be put in the place of the whole church? In this phraseology I recognize rather a symbolical application of the idea of guardian angels, similar to that of the Ferver of the Parsees, as a symbolical representation and image of the whole church. Such a figurative representation corresponds well with the poetical and symbolical character of the book throughout. It is also expressly said that the address is to the whole body of the churches.

This change in the mode of administering the government of the church, resulting from peculiar circumstances, may have been introduced as a salutary expedient, without implying any departure from the purity of the Christian spirit. When, however, the doctrine is, as it gradually gained currency in the third century, — that the bishops are, by divine right, the head of the church, and invested with the government of the same, that they are the successors of the apostles, and by this succession inherit apostolical authority, that they are the medium through which, in consequence of that ordination which they have received, merely in an outward manner, the Holy Ghost, in all time to come, must be transmitted to the church — when this becomes the doctrine of the church, we certainly must perceive, in these assumptions, a strong corruption of the purity of the Christian system. It is a carnal perversion of the true idea of the Christian church. It is falling back into the spirit of the Jewish religion. Instead of the Christian idea of a church, based on inward principles of communion, and extending itself by means of these, it presents us with the image of one, like that under the Old Testament, resting in outward ordinances, and, by external rites, seeking to promote the propagation of the kingdom of God. This entire perversion of the original view of the Christian church was itself the origin of the whole system of the Roman Catholic religion, — the germ from which sprung the popery of the dark ages.

We hold, indeed, no controversy with that class of Episcopalians who adhere to the Episcopal system above

mentioned as well adapted, in their opinion, to the exigencies of their church. We would live in harmony with them, notwithstanding their mistaken views of the true form of the church, provided they denounce not other systems of church government. But the doctrine of the absolute necessity of the Episcopal as the only valid form of government, and of the Episcopal succession of bishops above mentioned, in order to a participation in the gifts of the Spirit, all this we must regard as something foreign to the true idea of the Christian church. It is in direct conflict with the spirit of protestantism; and is the origin, not of the true catholicism of the apostles, but of that of the Romish church. When, therefore, Episcopalians disown, as essentially deficient in their ecclesiastical organization, other protestant churches which evidently have the spirit of Christ, it only remains for us to protest, in the strongest terms, against their setting up such a standard of perfection for the Christian church. Far be it from us, who began with Luther in the spirit, that we should now desire to be made perfect by the flesh. Gal. 3: 3.

DR. A. NEANDER.

Berlin, April 28th, 1843.



THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH.

CHAPTER I.

SUMMARY VIEW.

THE Christian church derived its earliest form from a small society of believers, who were united together by no law but that of the love they felt to one another, and to their common Lord.¹ After his ascension, they continued to meet, in singleness of heart, for the mutual interchange of sympathy and love, and for the worship of their Lord and Master. The government which, in process of time, the fraternity adopted for themselves, was free and voluntary. Both their rites of worship and rules of government were few and simple. Each individual church possessed the rights and powers inherent in an independent popular assembly; or, to adopt the language of another, "The right to enact their laws, and the entire government of the church, was vested in each individual association of which the church was composed, and was exercised by the members of the same, in connection with their overseers and teachers, and, when the apostles were present, in com-

¹ Neander's *Apost. Kirch.*, Vol. I, c. 1. Rothe, *Anfänge der Christ. Kirch.*, I, p. 141-2.

mon also with them."² This general exposition of the government of the primitive church, it will be our business to illustrate and defend in the following pages. The course of our inquiries will lead us to examine the popular government of the apostolical and primitive church, to trace the gradual extinction of this form of government, and the rise of the Episcopal system; and to consider the simplicity of primitive worship in its several parts.

The arguments for the popular government of the apostolical and primitive church may be arranged under the following heads.

1. It harmonizes with the primitive simplicity of all forms of government.

The multiplication of offices, the adjustment of the gradations of rank and power, and a complicated system of rites and forms, is the work of time. At first, the rules of government, however administered, are few and simple. The early Christians, especially, associating together in the confidence of mutual love, and uniting in sincerity of heart for the worship of God, may fairly be presumed to have had only a few conventional rules for the regulation of their fraternity.

2. It is, perhaps, the only form of government which the church could safely have formed, at that time, under the Roman government.

Without any established religion, this government tolerated, indeed, different religious sects, and might have extended the same indulgence to the primitive Christians. But it looked with suspicion upon every organization of party or sect, as treason against the state, and punished with cruel jealousy every indication of a confederacy

² Cited in *Allgemeine Kirch. Zeitung*, 1833. No. 103.

within the empire. The charge of treasonable intentions prevailed with the Roman governor against our Lord. And, by another Roman governor, a bloody persecution was soon commenced, under Trajan, A. D. 103, against the church, on the suspicion that it might be a secret society, formed for seditious purposes. Under these circumstances, it is difficult to conceive how a diocesan consolidation of the churches established by the apostles, could have been effected without bringing down upon them the vengeance of the Roman government, to crush, at the outset, a coalition to them so obnoxious. Their apparently harmless and informal assemblies, and the total absence of all dependence or connection, one with another, was, according to Planck and many others, the means of saving the early churches so long and so extensively from the exterminating sword of Roman jealousy.³

Crevit occulto, velut arbor, aevo.

3. Such an organization must have been formed, it would seem, in order to unite the discordant parties in the primitive churches.

Here was the Jew, the Greek, the Roman, and Barbarians of every form of superstition; converts, indeed, to faith in Christ, but with all their partialities and prejudices still. What but a voluntary principle, guaranteeing to all the freedom of a popular assembly, would unite these parties in one fraternity? Our Lord himself employed no artificial bands to bind his followers together in a permanent body, and they were alienated from him upon the slightest offence. The apostles had still less to bind their adherents firmly to themselves. It required all their wisdom and address to reconcile the discordant prejudices of their converts, and unite them in harmonious fellowship one with another.

³ *Gesellschafts-Verfass*, I, pp. 40—50.

This difficulty met the apostles at the outset of their ministry, in the murmuring of the Greeks against the Jews, that their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. It was a continual trial, and beset them on every side, from the churches which they had formed. Under such circumstances, they assumed not the responsibility of settling these controversies by apostolical or Episcopal authority; but by their counsel and persuasion, they sought to obviate the prejudices of their brethren. Every thing relating to the interests of each church they left to be publicly discussed, and decided by mutual consent. In this manner they quieted these complaints of the Greeks respecting the distribution of alms. Acts 6: 1—8. And such, no doubt, became their settled policy in their care of the churches. Even the apostles were not exempt from these infirmities and misunderstandings, and might have found no small difficulty in arranging among themselves a more artificial and complicated system of church government.⁴

4. The same is inferred from the existence of popular rights and privileges in the early periods of the Christian church.

It is known to every one at all acquainted with the early history of the church, that from the second century down to the final triumph of papacy, there was a strong and increasing tendency to raise and extend the authority of the clergy, and to curtail and depress that of the people. The fact is undeniable. But how shall it be explained? If a prelatical form of organization was divinely appointed by Christ and his apostles, vesting in the clergy alone the

⁴ Shroeter und Klein, Für Christenthum Oppositionsschrift, I, p. 567. Siegel, Handbuch, 2, 455-6. Arnold's Wahre-Abbildung der Ersten Christen, B. II, c. 5, seq. Schoene, Geschichtsforschungen d. Kirch. Gebräuch, I, p. 234-5.

right of government, and if the tide of clerical encroachment ran so steadily and strongly from the first, then it is inconceivable, how, under these circumstances, the doctrine of popular rights should ever have obtained such a footing in the church, as to maintain itself for centuries against the influences, so depressing, of a jealous and oppressive hierarchy. Had the doctrine of the popular rights been totally lost in the second and third centuries, this would by no means warrant the inference that such rights were unknown in the days of the apostles. They might have all been swept away by the irresistible tide of clerical influence and authority. But they were not lost. They were recognized even in the fourth and fifth centuries, and long after the hierarchy was established in connection with the state, and its authority enforced by the imperial power of Constantine and his successors. Were not the rights of the people established by Christ and the apostles? Else how could they ever have come in and maintained their ground against the current that continually ran with such strength in the opposite direction?

5. A popular form of church government harmonizes with the spirit, the instructions, and the example of Christ.

(a) *With his spirit.* He was of a meek and lowly mind, unostentatious and unassuming. He shrank from the demonstrations of power, and refused the titles and honors that, at times, were pressed upon his acceptance. With such a spirit, that religious system must be congenial, which, without any parade of titles and of rank, has few offices, and little to excite the pride or tempt the ambition of man.

(b) *With his instructions.* Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them, but it shall not be so among you; but whosoever will be great among you,

let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant; even as the Son of man came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. Matt. 20: 25—28. Comp. Mark 10: 42—45.

(c) *With his example.* This was in perfect coincidence with his instructions, and a striking illustration of his spirit. His life was a pattern of humility, of untiring, unostentatious benevolence. He condescended to the condition of all, and, as one of the latest and most expressive acts of his life, washed his disciples' feet, giving them an example for their imitation, as the servants of all men. Has such a spirit its just expression in a hierarchy, which has often dishonored the religion of Christ by the display of princely pomp, and the assumption of regal and imperial power?⁵

6. It equally accords with the spirit, the instructions, and the example of the apostles.

(a) *With their spirit.* They had renounced their hopes of aggrandizement in the kingdom of Christ, and had imbibed much of his spirit. The world took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus, and had learned of him, who was meek and lowly of heart. They account themselves the least of all saints, and the servants of all. This spirit, it would seem, must be foreign and far from the distinctions of rank and of office, as well as from the authority and power which are inherent in every form of the Episcopal system.

(b) *With their instructions.* These were in coincidence with those of their Master. The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men; apt to

⁵ The French infidels have an expression relating to our Saviour, which, though impious and profane, clearly indicates the nature of his instructions and example,—“*Jesus Christ, the great Democrat.*”

teach; patient (under injuries); in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves. 2 Tim. 2: 24—25. Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? 1 Cor. 3: 5. They disowned personal authority over the church, verses 14, 15; and instructed the elders not to lord it over God's heritage, but to be examples to the flock. 1 Pet. 5: 3. If, in the discharge of his ministry, one has occasion to reprove sin in an elder, this he is charged, before God and the elect angels, to do with all circumspection, without prejudice or partiality. 1 Tim. 5: 21.

(c) *With their example.* This is the best comment upon their instructions, and the clearest indication of that organization which the church received at their hands. They exercised, indeed, a controlling influence over the several churches which they established, just as an American missionary does in organizing his Christian converts into a church, while he constitutes them a popular assembly under a Congregational or Presbyterian form. In like manner, it is observable, that the apostles studiously declined the exercise of prelatical or Episcopal authority.⁶ But the control which they at first exercised in managing the affairs of the church was no part of their office. It was only a temporary expedient, resulting from the necessity of the case. Accordingly, they carefully disclaimed the official exercise of all clerical authority, and as soon as the circumstances of the churches would admit, they submitted to each the administration of its own government. In this manner, they gave to the churches the character of voluntary, deliberative assemblies, invested with the rights

⁶ Planck, Gesellschafts-verfass., 1, p. 39. Spittlers, Can. Recht, c. 1, § 3. Pertsch, Can. Recht, c. 1, § 5-8. Siegel, Kirchliche Verfassungsformen, in Handbuch, II, p. 455. Pertsch, Kirch., Hist., Vol. I. pp. 156—170, 362—370.

and privileges of religious liberty. This important fact is manifest in the following particulars.

(α) They addressed the members of the church as *brethren* and *sisters*, and fellow-laborers. I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes, I purposed to come unto you. Rom. 1: 13. And I, brethren, when I came unto you, came not in excellency of speech. 1 Cor. 2: 1. I commend unto you Phebe, our sister. Rom. 16: 1. The same familiar, affectionate style of address runs through all the epistles, showing in what consideration the apostles held all the members of the church. "The apostles severally were very far from placing themselves in a relation that bore any analogy to a mediating priesthood. In this respect they always placed themselves on a footing of equality. If Paul assured them of his intercessory prayers for them, he in return requested their prayers for himself."⁷

(β) The apostles remonstrate with the church as with *brethren*, instead of rebuking them authoritatively. Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you. 1 Cor. 1: 10. Furthermore, then, we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you. 1 Thess. 4: 1. My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. James 2: 1. They spoke not by *commandment*, but in the language of mutual counsellors. 1 Cor. 11: 13—16.⁸

(γ) They treated with the church as an independent body, competent to judge and act for themselves. They appealed to their judgment personally. 1 Cor. 11: 13—16. 1 Thess. 5: 21. They reported their own doings to the

⁷ Neander, Apostol. Kirch., I, p. 161, 3d edit.; and in the sequel much more to the same effect.

⁸ Comp. Socrates, Hist. Eccl., Lib. 5, c. 22.

church, as if amenable to that body, Acts 11: 1—18. 14: 26, 27, and exhorted the brethren to hold their teachers under their watch and discipline. Rom. 16: 17.

(δ) They exhorted the churches to deeds of charity and benevolence; but submitted to each the disposal of his goods and his charities. Acts 5: 4. 11: 29, 30, &c. 1 Cor. 16: 1, seq. 2 Cor. 9, 1, seq.

(ε) They addressed their epistles, not to the pastors of the churches, but to the churches, or to the churches and pastors collectively, giving precedence even in some instances to the church. Phil. 1: 1. Even the epistles which treat of controverted ecclesiastical matters, are addressed, not to the bishops and presbyters, but to the *whole body of believers*, indicating that the decision belonged to them. Had it been otherwise, would not such instructions and advice have been given to the ministers of the churches? ⁹

(ζ) They recognize the right of the church to send out their own religious teachers and messengers, as they might have occasion. Acts. 11: 19—24; 15: 32, 33. 2 Cor. 8: 23. Phil. 2: 25. 1 Cor. 16: 3, 4. These deputations, and the power of sending them, indicate the independent authority of the church.

(η) They united with the church in mutual consultation upon doubtful questions. The brethren took part in the dissension with Peter, for having preached unto the Gentiles. Acts 11: 1—18. The apostles united with them in the discussion of the question respecting circumcision, which was submitted to them by the delegation from Antioch, and the result was published in the name of the apostles and the *brethren*, jointly. Acts 15: 1, seq.

(θ) They submitted to the church the settlement of their own difficulties. The appointment of the seven

⁹ Comp. Ep. Clem. and Euseb., h. e. Lib. 4, c. 15. Lib. 5, c. 1, c. 24.

deacons, to obviate the murmurs of the Greeks, was made at the suggestion of the apostles, but the election was wholly the act of the church. Acts 6: 1—6. The apostles refused any authoritative arbitration in the case, and required them to choose arbitrators among themselves to settle their own litigations. 1 Cor. 6: 1.

(c) They entrusted the church, also, with the important right of electing their own officers. As in the case of the seven deacons, which we have just stated; the apostles refused even the responsibility of supplying, in their own number, the place of the traitor Judas, but submitted the choice to the assembly of the disciples. Acts 1: 15, seq. In this connection should the appointment of elders, Acts, 14: 23, also be mentioned, as may hereafter appear.

(*) The apostles submitted to the church the discipline of its members; as in the case of the incestuous person, who was excommunicated and afterwards restored to the church by that body. "The relations of presbyters to the church was not that of rulers with monarchical powers, but of the officers of an ecclesiastical republic. In all things they were to act in connection with the church, and to perform their duties as the servants, and not the lords of the church. The apostles recognized the same relation. They addressed their epistles, not to the officers of the church, but to the whole body, when treating not merely of doctrinal points, but of moral duties and of church discipline. The apostle Paul, when speaking of the excommunication of the incestuous person at Corinth, regards himself as united in spirit with the whole church, 1 Cor. 5: 4; thus indicating the principle, that their co-operation was required in all such cases of general interest."¹⁰

¹⁰ Neander's Allgem. Gesch., I, p. 324, 2d ed.

The churches, therefore, which were planted by the apostles, were under their sanction organized as independent popular assemblies, with power to elect officers, adopt rules, administer discipline, and to do all those acts which belong to such deliberative bodies.

7. The popular government of the primitive church is apparent from its analogy to the Jewish synagogue.

This and each of the following articles, under this head, will be the subjects of consideration in another place. They are assumed as so many separate heads of argumentation, so far as they may appear to be founded in truth. Comp. Chap. II.

8. The primitive churches were severally independent bodies, in Christian fellowship, but having no confederate relations one toward another.

"The power of enacting laws," says Mosheim, "of appointing teachers and ministers, and of determining controversies, was lodged in the people at large; nor did the apostles, though invested with divine authority, either resolve or sanction any thing whatever, without the knowledge and concurrence of the general body of Christians, of which the church was composed."¹¹ Comp. Chap. III.

9. These churches each enjoyed the inherent right of every independent body, that of choosing their own officers.

This right, which, as we have seen, belonged to the apostolical churches, was perpetuated in the churches through the ages immediately following. Comp. Chap. IV.

¹¹ De Rebus Christ., &c., § 1, 37. To the same effect, also, is the authority of Neander, *Apost. Kirch.*, pp. 1, 161, 201, 214, 3d ed.

10. As in the apostolical, so in the primitive churches, the right of discipline was vested, not in the clergy, but in each church collectively.¹²

Even the officers of the church were subject to the authority of the same. Clement recognizes this authority in his epistle to the Corinthians.¹³ Comp. Chap. V.

11. The appropriate officers were two-fold, deacons, and pastors. These pastors were denominated indiscriminately bishops, *overseers*, and elders, *presbyters*, and were at first identical and equal. Comp. Chap. VI.

The government of the church was the peculiar office of such overseers, the bishops or presbyters. It was their business to watch over the general order, — to maintain the purity of the Christian doctrine and of Christian practice, — to guard against abuses, — to admonish the faulty, — and to guide the public deliberations; as appears from the passages in the New Testament where their functions are described. But their government by no means excluded the participation of the whole church in the management of their common concerns, as may be inferred from what we have already remarked respecting the nature of Christian communion, and is also evident from many individual examples in the apostolical churches. The whole church at Jerusalem took part in the deliberations respecting the relation of the Jewish and Gentile Christians to each other, and the epistle drawn up after these deliberations was likewise in

¹² *Primo omnibus ecclesiae membris jus eligendi pastores et diaconos erat. Communicatio erat quaedam inter varios coetus christianos vel ecclesias; literae quas altera acceperat alteri legendae mittebantur. Pecunias ad pauperes sublevandos ecclesia ecclesiae donabat. De rebus fidei disciplinae jam apostoli deliberaverunt. Quaequae ecclesia exercebat jus excommunicandi eos qui doctrinae et vitae christianae renunciaverant, eosque recipiendi quorum poenitentia et mentis mutatio constabat. Sic prima christianorum ecclesia libertate, concordia, sanctitate floruit.* Sack Comment, ad Theol. Inst., p. 141.

¹³ Epist. § 54, comp. 44. Also Pertsch. Kirch., Hist. I, 362.

the name of the whole church. The epistles of the apostle Paul, which treat of various controverted ecclesiastical matters, are addressed to whole churches, and he assumes that the decision belonged to the whole body. Had it been otherwise, would he not have addressed his instructions and advice, principally at least, to the overseers of the church? When a licentious person belonging to the church at Corinth is to be excommunicated, the apostle treats it as a measure that ought to proceed from the whole society; and places himself, therefore, in spirit among them, to unite with them in passing judgment; 1 Cor. 5: 3—5. Also, when discoursing of the settlement of litigations, the apostle does not affirm that it properly belonged to the overseers of the church; but if this had been the prevalent custom, he would no doubt have referred to it; what he says seems rather to imply that it was usual, in particular instances, to select arbitrators from among the members of the church, 1 Cor. 6: 5.¹⁴

Greiling, after going through with an examination of the government of the apostolical churches, gives the following summary. "In the age of the apostles, there was no primate of the churches, but the entire equality of brethren prevailed. They themselves exercised no kind of authority or power over the churches; but styled themselves their helpers and servants. The settlement of controverted points, the adoption of new rites, the discipline of the church, the election of presbyters, and even the election of an apostle, was submitted to the church, and done with their concurrence, and in their name. The principle on which the apostles proceeded was, that the *church*, that is, the elders and the members of the church unitedly, were the depositaries of all their social rights, and that *no others* could exercise this right but those to whom the church might entrust it, and who

¹⁴ Neander, Apost. Kirch., I, pp. 1, 201. Comp. also, p. 214.

were accordingly amenable to the church. Even the apostles, though next to Christ himself, invested with the highest authority, assumed no superiority over the presbyters, but treated them as brethren, and styled themselves fellow-presbyters,—thus recognizing them as associates in office.”¹⁵

Finally, the worship of the primitive churches was remarkable for its freedom and simplicity. Their religious rites were few and simple; and restrained by no complicated ritual, or prescribed ceremonials. This point is considered, at length, in a subsequent part of the work.

The government was throughout wholly popular. Every church adopted its own regulations, and enacted its own laws. These laws were administered by officers elected by the church. No one church was dependent upon another. They were represented in synod by their own delegates. Their discipline was administered, not by the clergy, but by the people or the church collectively. And even after ordination became the exclusive right of the bishop, no one was permitted to preach to any congregation, who was not sufficiently approved, and duly accepted by the congregation; and all their religious worship was conducted on the same principles of freedom and equality.

Such was the organization of the Christian church in its primitive simplicity and purity. The national peculiarities of the Jewish and Gentile converts, in some degree, modified individual churches, but the form of government was substantially the same in all. We claim not, indeed, for it authority absolutely imperative and divine, to the exclusion of every other system, but it has, we must believe, enough of precept, of precedent, and of principle, to give it a sanction truly apostolic. Its advantages and practical results justly claim an attentive consideration.

¹⁵ Apostol. Christengemeinen. Halberstadt, 1819.

CHAPTER II.

THE PRIMITIVE CHURCHES FORMED AFTER THE MODEL OF THE JEWISH SYNAGOGUE.

THE apostles and the first disciples were Jews, who, after their conversion, retained all the prejudices and partialities of their nation. They observed still all the rites of their religion; and, firmly believing that salvation by Christ belonged only to the circumcision, they refused the ministry of reconciliation to the Gentiles. All their national peculiarities led them to conform the Christian to the Jewish church.

With the temple service and the Mosaic ritual, however, Christianity had no affinity. The sacrificial offerings of the temple, and the Levitical priesthood, it abolished. But in the synagogue worship, the followers of Christ found a more congenial institution. It invited them to the reading of the Scriptures, and to prayer. It gave them liberty of speech in exhortation, and in worshipping and praising God. The rules and government of the synagogue, while they offered little, comparatively, to excite the pride of office and of power, commended themselves the more to the humble believer in Christ. The synagogue was endeared to the devout Jew by sacred associations and tender recollections. It was near at hand, and not, like the temple, afar off. He went but seldom up to Jerusalem, and only on great occasions joined in the rites of the temple

service. But in the synagogue he paid his constant devotions to the God of his fathers. It met his eye in every place. It was constantly before him, and from infancy to hoary age, he was accustomed to repair to that hallowed place of worship, to listen to the reading of his sacred books, to pray and sing praises unto the God of Israel. In accordance with pious usage, therefore, the apostles continued to frequent the synagogues of the Jews. Wherever they went, they resorted to these places of worship, and strove to convert their brethren to faith in Christ, not as a new religion, but as a modification of their own.

In their own religious assemblies they also conformed, as far as was consistent with the spirit of the Christian religion, to the same rites, and gradually settled upon a church organization which harmonized, in a remarkable manner, with that of the Jewish synagogue. They even retained the same *name*, as the appellation of their Christian assemblies. "If there come into your assembly, *συναγωγῇ*, if there come into your *synagogue* a man with a gold ring, &c." James 2: 2. Compare also *ἐπισυναγωγῇ*. Heb. 10: 25. Their modes of worship were, substantially, the same as those of the synagogue. The *titles of their officers* they also borrowed from the same source. The titles, Bishop, Pastor, Presbyter, &c., were all familiar to them as synonymous terms, denoting the same class of officers in the synagogue. Their duties and prerogatives remained, in substance, the same in the Christian church as in that of the Jews.

So great was this similarity between the primitive Christian churches and the Jewish synagogues, that by the Pagan nations they were mistaken for the same institutions. Pagan historians uniformly treated the primitive Christians as Jews.¹ As such, they suffered under the

¹ Vitringa De Synagog., Vet. Prolegom., pp. 3, 4.

persecutions of their idolatrous rulers. These, and many other particulars that might be mentioned, are sufficient to show, that the ecclesiastical polity of the Jewish synagogue was very closely copied by the apostles and primitive Christians in the organization of their assemblies.

In support of the foregoing statements, authorities, to any extent, and of the highest character, might easily be adduced. Let the following, however, suffice, from Neander, who is generally acknowledged to be more profoundly skilled in the history of the Christian church than any other man now living. "The disciples had not yet attained a clear understanding of that call, which Christ had already given them by so many intimations, to form a church entirely separated from the existing Jewish economy; to that economy they adhered as much as possible; all the forms of the national theocracy were sacred in their esteem; it seemed the natural element of their religious consciousness, though a higher principle of life had been imparted, by which that consciousness was to be progressively inspired and transformed. They remained outwardly Jews, although, in proportion as their faith in Jesus as the Redeemer became clearer and stronger, they would inwardly cease to be Jews, and all external rites would assume a different relation to their internal life. It was their belief that the existing religious forms would continue till the second coming of Christ, when a new and higher order of things would be established, and this great change they expected would shortly take place. Hence the establishment of a distinct mode of worship was far from entering their thoughts. Although new ideas respecting the essence of true worship arose in their minds from the light of faith in the Redeemer, they felt as great an interest in the temple worship as any devout Jews. They believed, however, that a sifting would take place among the members of the theocracy, and that the better part would, by



the acknowledgment of Jesus as the Messiah, be incorporated with the Christian community. As the believers, in opposition to the mass of the Jewish nation who remained hardened in their unbelief, now formed a community internally bound together by the one faith in Jesus as the Messiah, and by the consciousness of the higher life received from him, it was necessary that this internal union should assume a certain external form. And a model for such a smaller community within the great national theocracy already existed among the Jews, along with the temple worship, namely, *the synagogues*. The means of religious edification which they supplied, took account of the religious welfare of all, and consisted of united prayers and the addresses of individuals who applied themselves to the study of the Old Testament. These means of edification closely corresponded to the nature of the new Christian worship. This form of social worship, as it was copied in all the religious communities founded on Judaism (such as the Essenes), was also adopted, to a certain extent, at the first formation of the Christian church. But it may be disputed, whether the apostles, to whom Christ committed the chief direction of affairs, designed from the first that believers should form a society exactly on the model of the synagogue, and, in pursuance of this plan, instituted particular offices for the government of the church corresponding to that model—or whether, without such a preconceived plan, distinct offices were appointed, as circumstances required, in doing which they would avail themselves of the model of the synagogue with which they were familiar.”² The latter supposition is forcibly advocated by Neander,³ who proceeds to say, “Hence, we are disposed to believe, that the church was at first composed entirely of members standing on an equality

² Apost. Kirch., 3d edit., p. 4. Comp. 179, 198.

³ Comp., also, Rothe, *Anfänge*, p. 163. Note.

one with another, and that the apostles alone held a higher rank, and exercised a directing influence over the whole, which arose from the original position in which Christ had placed them in relation to other believers; so that the whole arrangement and administration of the affairs of the church proceeded from them, and they were first induced by particular circumstances to appoint other church officers, as in the instance of deacons."⁴ To the same effect is also Neander's account of this subject in his Church History, where he shows that this organization of Christian churches was the most natural under existing circumstances, and the most acceptable, not only to Jewish converts, but to those who were gathered from the subjects of the Roman government.⁵ If the reader require other authority on this subject, he has only to examine Vitringa, *De Synagoga Vetere*, especially his third book, to say nothing of Selden, Lightfoot, and many others. Vitringa himself has fully sustained the bold title which he gives to his immortal work,—“Three books on the ancient Synagogue; in which it is *demonstrated*, that the form of government and of the ministry in the synagogue was transferred to the Christian church.”

It is gratifying to observe, that these views of the great Lutheran historian are fully avowed by Archbishop Whately with his usual independence and candor. “It is probable that one cause, humanly speaking, why we find in the Sacred Books less information concerning the Christian ministry and the constitution of church-governments than we otherwise might have found, is that these institutions had less of *novelty* than some would at first sight suppose, and that many portions of them did not wholly originate with the apostles. It appears highly probable,—I might say, morally certain,—that wherever a Jewish synagogue existed, that was brought,—the whole,

⁴ P. 44. Comp. 195, seq. So, also, Rothe, *Anfänge*, p. 146—148.

⁵ *Kirchen. Gesch.*, I, p. 183—185.



or the chief part of it,—to embrace the gospel, the apostles did not, there, so much *form* a Christian church (or congregation,* *ecclesia*), as *make an existing congregation Christian*; by introducing the Christian sacraments and worship, and establishing whatever regulations were requisite for the newly-adopted faith; leaving the machinery (if I may so speak) of government unchanged; the “rulers of synagogues, elders, and other officers (whether spiritual or ecclesiastical, or both), being already provided in the existing institutions. And it is likely that several of the earliest Christian churches did originate in this way; that is, that they were *converted synagogues*; which became Christian churches as soon as the members, or the main part of the members, acknowledged Jesus as the Messiah.

“The attempt to effect this conversion of a Jewish synagogue into a Christian church, seems always to have been made, in the first instance, in every place where there was an opening for it. Even after the call of the idolatrous Gentiles, it appears plainly to have been the practice of the apostles Paul and Barnabas,† when they came to any city

* The word “congregation,” as it stands in our version of the Old Testament (and it is one of very frequent occurrence in the Books of Moses), is found to correspond, in the Septuagint, which was familiar to the New-Testament writers, to *ecclesia*; the word which, in our version of these last, is always rendered—not “congregation,” but “church.” This, or its equivalent, “kirk,” is probably no other than “circle;” i. e., assembly, *ecclesia*.

† These seem to be the first who are employed in converting the *idolatrous* Gentiles to Christianity,* and their first considerable harvest among these seems to have been at Antioch in Pisidia, as may be seen by any one who attentively reads the 13th chapter of Acts. Peter was sent to Cornelius, a “*devout*” Gentile;—one of those who had renounced idolatry, and frequented the synagogues. And these seem to have been regarded by him as in an especial manner his particular charge. His epistles appear to have been addressed to them, as may be seen both by the general tenor of his expression,† and especially in the opening address, which is not (as would appear from our version) to the dispersed *Jews*, but to the “*sojourners of the dispersion*,” *παρεπιδημους, διασπορας*, i. e. the *devout Gentiles living among the “dispersion.”*

* See Barrington's *Miscellanea Sacra*.

† See Hinds's *History*, Vol. II.

in which there was a synagogue, to go thither first and deliver their sacred message to the Jews and 'devout (or proselyte) Gentiles;'—according to their own expression (Acts 13: 17), to the 'men of Israel and those *that feared God*:' adding, that 'it was necessary that the word of God should first be preached to them.' And when they founded a church in any of those cities in which (and such were, probably, a very large majority) there was no Jewish synagogue that received the gospel, it is likely they would still conform, in a great measure, to the same model."⁶

It is, then, an admitted fact, as clearly settled as any thing can be by human authority, that the primitive Christians, in the organization of their assemblies, formed them after the model of the Jewish synagogue. They discarded the splendid ceremonials of the temple-service, and retained the simple rites of the synagogue worship. They disowned the hereditary aristocracy of the Levitical priesthood,⁷ and adopted the popular government of the synagogue.⁸

We are here presented with an important fact in the organization of the primitive churches, strongly illustrative of the popular character of their constitution and government. The synagogue was, essentially, a popular assembly, invested with the rights and possessing the powers which are essential to the enjoyment of religious liberty. Their government was voluntary, elective, free; and administered by rulers or elders elected by the people. The ruler of the synagogue was the moderator of the college of elders, but only *primus inter pares*, holding no official rank above them.⁹ The people, as Vitringa has

⁶ Kingdom of Christ, pp. 83—86.

⁷ The prelatical reference of the Christian ministry to the Levitical priesthood is a device of a later age, though it has been common from the time of Cyprian downward to the present time.

⁸ Totum regimen ecclesiasticum conformatum fuit ad synagogarum exemplar. Hugo Grotius, Comment., ad Act. 11: 30.

⁹ Vitringa, De Vet. Syn., L. 3, c. 16.

shown,¹⁰ appointed their own officers to rule over them. They exercised the natural right of freemen to enact and execute their own laws,—to admit proselytes,—and to exclude, at pleasure, unworthy members from their communion. Theirs was “*a democratical form of government*,” and is so described by one of the most able expounders of the constitution of the primitive churches.¹¹ Like their prototype, therefore, the primitive churches also embodied the principle of a popular government and of enlightened religious liberty.

¹⁰ Comp. Vitringa, De Synagoga, Lib. 3, p. 1, c. 15. pp. 828—863. Nihil actum absque ecclesia [i. e. the synagogue] quae in publico consulta est, et quidem hac ipsa formula עליון קרבן sive *ἄριστος*, quam in vetero ecclesia in eligendis episcopis adhibitam meminimus, p. 829. In vita Josephi publica omnia ibi tractari videmus in synagoga, *consulto populo*, p. 832.

¹¹ Rothe, Anfänge, der Christ. Kirch., p. 14.

CHAPTER III.

INDEPENDENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCHES.

THE churches which were established by the apostles and their disciples exhibit a remarkable degree of unanimity one towards another. One in faith and the fellowship of love, they were united in spirit as different members of one body, or as brethren of the same family.¹ This union and fellowship of spirit the apostles carefully promoted among all the churches. But they instituted no external form of union or confederation between those of different towns or provinces; nor, within the first century of the Christian era can any trace of such a confederacy, whether diocesan or voluntary, be detected on the page of history. The diocesan, metropolitan and patriarchal forms of organization belong to a later age. The idea of a holy catholic church, one and indivisible, had not yet arisen upon the world, nor had the church assumed any outward form of union. Wherever converts to Christianity were multiplied they formed themselves into a church, under the guidance of their religious teachers, for the enjoyment of Christian ordinances. But each individual church constituted an independent and separate community. The society was purely voluntary, and every church so constituted was strictly independent of all others in the conduct of its

¹ 1 Cor. 12: 12, 13. Eph. 2: 20. 4: 3.

worship, the admission of its members, the exercise of its discipline, the choice of its officers and the entire management of its affairs. They were, in a word, independent republics, as Mosheim and Neander justly describe them. "Each individual church which had a bishop or presbyter of its own, assumed to itself the form and rights of a little distinct republic or commonwealth; and with regard to its internal concerns was wholly regulated by a code of laws, that if they did not originate with, had at least received the sanction of the people constituting such church." This is said with special reference to the earliest churches.² "In regard to the relations of the presbyters to the churches, they were appointed, not to exercise unlimited authority, but to act as the leaders and rulers of ecclesiastical republics, to transact every thing in connection with the church, not as lords of the same, but as its servants."³ The opinion of these great historians of the church, in respect to the independent, popular character of the government of the primitive churches, is sufficiently obvious in these passages.

Particular neighboring churches may for various reasons have sustained peculiar fraternal relations to each other. Local and other circumstances may, in time, have given rise to correspondence between churches more remote, or to mutual consultations by letter and by delegates, as in the instance of the churches at Antioch and Jerusalem, Acts 15, and of Corinth and Rome;⁴ but no established jurisdiction was exercised by one over the other, nor did any settled relations subsist between them. The church at Jerusalem, with the apostles and elders, addressed the church at Antioch, not in the language of authority, but of *advice*. Nor does all ancient history, sacred or profane, relating to this early period, record a single instance in

² Mosheim, *De Rebus Christ.*, Sæc. 11, § 22.

³ Neander, *Allgemein. Gesch.*, 1, 291, 2.

⁴ See Epistle of Clement of Rome, to the Corinthians.

which one church presumed to impose laws of its own upon another.

This independence of the churches, one of another, is fully and clearly presented by Mosheim. "Although all the churches were, in this first age of Christianity, united together in one common bond of faith and love, and were, in every respect, ready to promote the interest and welfare of each other by a reciprocal interchange of good offices, yet, with regard to government and internal economy, every individual church considered itself as an independent community, none of them ever looking beyond the circle of its own members for assistance, or recognizing any sort of external influence or authority. Neither in the New Testament, nor in any ancient document whatever, do we find any thing recorded, from whence it might be inferred that any of the minor churches were at all dependent on, or looked up for direction to, those of greater magnitude or consequence. On the contrary, several things occur therein which put it out of all doubt, that every one of them enjoyed the same rights, and was considered as being on a footing of the most perfect equality with the rest. Indeed it cannot, I will not say be proved, but even be made to appear probable, from testimony human or divine, that in this age it was the practice for several churches to enter into and maintain among themselves, that sort of association which afterwards came to subsist among the churches of almost every province. I allude to their assembling by their bishops, at stated periods, for the purpose of enacting general laws, and determining any questions or controversies that might arise respecting divine matters. It is not until the second century, that any traces of that sort of association from whence councils took their origin are to be perceived; when we find them occurring here and there, some of them tolerably clear and distinct, others again but slight and faint, which seems plainly to prove



that the practice arose subsequently to the times of the apostles, and that all that is urged concerning the councils of the first century and the divine authority of councils, is sustained merely by the most uncertain kind of support, namely, the practice and opinion of more recent times." ⁵

Indications of this original independence are distinctly manifested even after the rise of Episcopacy. Every bishop had the right to form his own liturgy and creed, and to settle at pleasure his own time and mode of celebrating the religious festivals. ⁶ Cyprian strongly asserts the right of every bishop to make laws for his own church. Socrates assigns this original independence of the bishops as the principal cause of the endless controversies in the church, respecting the observance of Easter and other festivals. ⁷

But we need not enlarge. Nothing in the history of the primitive churches is more incontrovertible, than the fact of their absolute independence one of another. It is attested by the highest historical authorities, and appears to be generally conceded by Episcopal authors themselves. "At first," says the learned Dr. Barrow, "every church was settled apart under its own bishops and presbyters, so as independently and separately to manage its own concerns. Each was governed by its own head and had its own laws." ⁸

"Every church," according to Dr. Burton, "had its own spiritual head or bishop, and was independent of every other church, with respect to its own internal regulations and laws. There was, however, a connexion, more or less intimate, between neighboring churches, which was

⁵ De Rebus, Christ. Saec., I, § 48.

⁶ Greiling, Apostol. Christengemein., p. 16.

⁷ Eccles. Hist., Lib. 5, c. 22.

⁸ Treatise on Pope's Supremacy, Works, Vol. I, p. 662. Comp. King's Prim. Christ., c. 12, p. 14, also 136.

a consequence, in some degree, of the geographical or civil divisions of the empire. Thus the churches of one province, such as Achaia, Egypt, Cappadocia, &c., formed a kind of union, and the bishop of the capital, particularly if his see happened to be of apostolic foundation, acquired a precedence in rank and dignity over the rest. This superiority was often increased by the bishop of the capital (who was called, in later times, the metropolitan) having actually planted the church in smaller and more distant places; so that the mother-church, as it might literally be termed, continued to feel a natural and parental regard for the churches planted by itself. These churches, however, were wholly independent in matters of internal jurisdiction; though it was likely that there would be a resemblance, in points even of slight importance, between churches of the same province."

Riddle's account of this subject is as follows:—"The apostles or their representatives exercised a general superintendence over the churches by divine authority, attested by miraculous gifts. The subordinate government of each particular church was vested in itself; that is to say, the whole body elected its ministers and officers, and was consulted concerning all matters of importance. All churches were independent of each other, but were united by the bonds of holy charity, sympathy and friendship."⁹

Similar views are also expressed by Archbishop Whately. "Though there was one Lord, one faith, one baptism, for all of these, yet they were each a distinct, independent community on earth, united by the common principles on which they were founded by their mutual agreement, affection and respect; but not having any one recognized head on earth, or acknowledging any sovereignty of one of those societies over others. Each

⁹ Chronology, Beginning of Second Century.



bishop originally presided over one entire church." ¹⁰ Now what, according to these Epistopal concessions, was the bishop at first, but the pastor of a single church, a *parochial bishop*, exercising only the jurisdiction, and enjoying the rights of an independent Congregational minister? But more of this hereafter.

Several of the ancient churches firmly asserted and maintained their original religious liberty, by refusing to acknowledge the authority of the ancient councils, for a long time after the greater part of the churches had subjected themselves to the authority of these confederacies. The church in Africa, for example, and some of the Eastern churches, although they adopted the custom of holding councils, and were in correspondence with these churches, declined entering into any grand Christian confederation with them; and, for a long time, remained inflexibly tenacious of their own just liberty and independence. This their example is an effectual argument in refutation of those who pretend that these councils were divinely appointed and had, *jure divino*, authority over the churches. Who can suppose that these churches would have asserted their independence so sternly, against an institution appointed by our Lord or his apostles? ¹¹

The independence of the churches, then, is conceded even by Episcopalians themselves. It has both the sanction of apostolical precedent, and the concurring authority of ecclesiastical writers, ancient and modern. This of itself is a point strongly illustrative of the religious freedom

¹⁰ Kingdom of Christ. N. Y., 1842; p. 110, 136.

¹¹ Even the council of Nice, in treating of the authority of the metropolitan bishops of Rome, Antioch and Alexandria, rest the dignity and authority of these prelates, not on any *divine right*, but solely on ancient usage. *Τὰ ἀρχαῖα ἔθνη κρατεῖτω, &c.*, ἐπειδὴ καὶ τῷ ἐν τῇ Ρώμῃ ἐπισκόπῳ σὺνῆθες, ἐστίν, Can. 6. Comp. Du. Pin, Antiq. Eccel. Disciplina. Diss. 1., § 7. Mosheim, De Rebus Christ. Saec., II., § 23, Note.

which was the basis of their original polity. This independence of particular churches is the great central principle, the original element, of their popular constitution and government. It vests the authority and power of each church in its own members collectively. It guards their rights. It guarantees to them the elective franchise, and gives them the enjoyment of religious liberty, under a government administered by the voice of the majority, or delegated at pleasure to their representatives. The constitution of the churches, and their mutual relations, may not have been precisely Congregational or Presbyterian, but they involved the principles of the religious freedom and the popular rights which both are designed to protect.



CHAPTER IV.

ELECTIONS BY THE CHURCH.

THE right of suffrage was, from the beginning, enjoyed in the Christian church. The first public act of this body was a formal recognition and a legitimate exercise of this right. First in importance among their popular rights, they maintained it with greater constancy than any other against the usurpations of prelatical power, and resigned it last of all into the hands of their spiritual oppressors. The subject of the following chapter leads us to consider,

I. The evidence that the right of suffrage was enjoyed by the primitive church.

II. The time and means of the extinction of this right.

I. The members of the primitive church enjoyed the right of electing, by a popular vote, their own officers and teachers. The evidence in support of this position is derived from the writings of the apostles and of the early fathers. In the former, we have on record instances of the election of an apostle, and of deacons, delegates and presbyters of the church, each by a popular vote of that body. From the latter, we learn that the church continued for several centuries subsequent to the age of the apostles, in the enjoyment of the elective franchise.

1. The scriptural argument from the writings of the apostles.

(a) The election of an apostle.

The first public act of the church, after our Lord's ascension, was the choice of a substitute in the place of the apostle Judas. This election was made, not by the apostles themselves, but by the joint action of the whole body of believers. If, in any instance, the apostles had the right, by their own independent authority, to invest another with the ministerial office, we might expect them to exercise that prerogative in supplying this vacancy in their own body. That right, however, they virtually disclaim, by submitting the election to the arbitration of the assembled body of believers. If they exercised any leading influence in the election, it was in nominating the two candidates for office, Joseph and Matthias, Acts 1: 23. Nothing, however, appears from the context to decide whether the nomination, even, proceeded from them, or from the church collectively. But however that may be, the *election* was the act of the assembly; and was made, either by casting lots, or by an elective vote. Mosheim understands the phrase, *ἔδωκεν κλήρους ἀδελφῶν*, to express the casting of a *popular vote* by the Christians. To express the casting of lots, according to this author, the verb should have been *ἐβαλον*, as in Math. 27: 35. Luke 23: 34. John 19: 24. Mark 15: 24. Compare Septuagint, Ps. 22: 19. Joel 3: 3. Nah. 3: 10; which also accords with the usage of Homer in similar cases.¹ But the phrase *ἔδωκεν κλήρους*, according to this author, expresses the casting of a popular vote; the term, *κλήρους*, being used in the sense of *ψῆφος*, a *suffrage*, or *vote*, so that what the evangelist meant to say was simply this,—“and those who were present gave their votes.”²

¹ Iliad, 23, 352. Odys., 14, 209.

² De Rebus Christ. Saec., 1, § 14, Note.

The precise mode of determining the election, perhaps, can never be fully settled. Nor are the persons who gave the vote clearly designated, but they appear to have been the whole body of believers then present. When we compare this election with that of the deacons which soon followed, and consider the uniform custom of the disciples to submit to the church the enacting of their own laws, and the exercise of their popular rights, in other respects, we must regard the election before us as the joint act of the brethren there assembled. For this opinion, we have high authority from German writers. "The whole company of believers had a part in supplying the number of the apostles themselves, and the choice was their joint act."³ "At the request of the apostles, the church choose, by lot, Matthias for an apostle, in the place of Judas."⁴ "Without doubt, those expositors adopt the right view, who suppose that not only the apostles, but all the believers were at that time assembled; for, though in Acts 1: 26, the apostles are primarily intended, yet the *disciples collectively* form the chief subject, Acts 15, to which *all* at the beginning of the second chapter necessarily refers."⁵ This is said with reference to the assembly on the day of Pentecost, but the reasoning shows distinctly the views of the author respecting the persons who composed the assembly at the election of Matthias. "In all decisions and acts, even in the election of the twelfth apostle, the church had a voice."⁶

Chrysostom's exposition of the passage, confirmed as it is also by Cyprian, may, without doubt, be received as a fair expression of the sentiments and usages of the early church on this subject. "Peter did every thing here with

³ Rohr's Kritischen Predigenbibliothek. Bd. 13, Heft. 6.

⁴ D. Grossman Ueber eine Reformation der protestantischen Kirchenverfassung in Königreiche Sachsen. Leipsig, 1833, p. 47.

⁵ Neander, Apost. Kirch., 1, c. 1, Note.

⁶ Greiling's Apostol. Kirchengemeinen, p. 15.

the common consent; nothing by his own will and authority. He left the judgment to the multitude, to secure the greater respect to the elected, and to free himself from every invidious reflection." After quoting the words, "they appointed two," he adds, "he did not himself appoint them, it was the act of all."⁷

The order of the transaction appears to be as follows:— Peter stands up in the midst of the disciples, convened in assembly to the number of one hundred and twenty, and explains to them the necessity of their proceeding to the choice of another apostle in the place of the apostate Judas, and urges them to proceed to the election of such. The whole assembly then designate two of their number as candidates for the office, and after prayer for divine direction, all cast lots, and the lot falls upon Matthias;⁸ or, according to Mosheim, all cast their *votes*, and the vote falls upon Matthias. Whatever may have been the *mode* of the election, it appears to have been a popular vote, and indicates the inherent right of the people to make the election.

(b) The election of the seven deacons, Acts 6:1—6.

The proposition originated, again, with the apostles. It was received with approbation by the whole multitude, who immediately proceeded to make the election by an united and public vote. The order of the transaction is very clearly marked. The apostles propose to "the multitude of the disciples" the appointment of the seven. The proposal is favorably received by "the whole multitude," who accordingly proceed to the choice of the proposed number, and set them before the apostles, not to ratify the election, but to induct them into office by the laying on of hands. This election is clearly set forth as the act of the whole

⁷ Hom. ad locum, T. IX, p. 25. Comp. Cyprian, Ep. 68.

⁸ Rothe, *Anfänge der Christ. Kirch.*, p. 149.

assembly, and is so universally admitted to have been made by a popular vote, that it may be passed without further remark. Indeed, "it is impossible," as Owen very justly observes, "that there should be a more evident convincing instance and example of the free choice of ecclesiastical officers by the multitude or fraternity of the church, than is given us herein. Nor was there any ground or reason why this order and process should be observed, why the apostles would not themselves nominate and appoint persons, whom they saw and knew meet for this office to receive it, but that it was the right and liberty of the people, according to the mind of Christ, to choose their own officers, which they would not abridge or infringe."⁹

(c) The election of delegates of the churches.

These delegates were the fellow-laborers and assistants of the apostle, to accompany him in his travels, to assist in setting in order the churches, and generally to supply his lack of service to all the churches, the care of which came upon him. Such, according to Rothe, was Timothy, whom he commends as his fellow-laborer, Rom. 16: 21. 1 Thess. 3: 2, and associates with himself in salutation to the churches. Phil. 1: 1. 1 Thess. 1: 1. 2 Thess. 1: 1, &c. Such was Titus, 2 Cor. 8: 23. Silvanus, 1 Thess. 1: 1. 2 Thess. 1: 1. Mark, Coloss. 4: 10. 1 Pet. 5: 13. Clemens, Phil. 4: 3. Epaphras, Coloss. 1: 7, &c.¹⁰

But whatever may have been the specific duties of this office, the appointment to it was made by a vote of the church. One such assistant Paul greatly commends, who was appointed by the church, χειροτονηθεὶς ὑπο τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν, 2 Cor. 8: 19, as his travelling companion. To this and the election of the seven deacons, Neander refers, as evidence of the manner in which this popular right was exercised in the churches. "Inasmuch as the apostles submitted the appointment of the deacons to the vote of the

⁹ Gospel Church, Chap. IV.

¹⁰ Anfänge, I, pp. 305—307.

church, and that of the delegates who should accompany them in the name of the churches, we may infer that a similar course was pursued also in the appointment of other officers of the church."¹¹

Rothe appeals to the same example, as a clear instance of a popular election, and adds, that it harmonizes with the authority of Clement of Rome, who states explicitly, that where the apostles had established churches they appointed bishops and deacons, "*with the approbation of the whole church.*"¹²

(d) The election of presbyters.

This is a fair conclusion from the examples that have already been given. If the apostles submitted to the church the election of one of their number as an extraordinary and temporary minister, much more may they be supposed to have submitted to the same body the election of their ordinary pastors and teachers, the presbyters. Or, if there be any doubt as to the choice of Matthias by the church, there can be none of the election of the deacons and delegates by a popular vote. In this conclusion, we are sustained by the authority of Neander,¹³ Rothe,¹⁴ and Mosheim. "That the presbyters of the primitive church of Jerusalem were elected by the suffrages of the people, cannot, I think, well be doubted by any one who shall have duly considered the prudence and moderation discovered by the apostles, in filling up the vacancy in their own number, and in appointing curators or guardians for the poor."¹⁵ After having proceeded to invest the churches with the right of electing their own officers, can the apostles be supposed to invade this sacred right, by refusing to them the election of their own pastors and teachers?

These several instances of election chiefly relate to the church at Jerusalem. But wherever churches were planted

¹¹ Allgemein. Gesch., I, p. 290.

¹² Anfänge, I, p. 151.

¹³, ¹⁴ Cited above.

¹⁵ Mosheim, De Rebus Christ., Saec., I, § 39.

by the apostles, they were, without doubt, organized after the original plan of that at Jerusalem; so that the above is a fair exhibition of the mode of appointment which generally prevailed in the churches. "The new churches," says Gieseler, "every where formed themselves on the model of the mother church at Jerusalem."¹⁶ So also, Mosheim: "Since all these churches were constituted and formed after the model of that which was planted at Jerusalem, a review of the constitution and regulations of this one church alone will enable us to form a tolerably accurate conception of the form and discipline of all these primitive Christian assemblies."¹⁷

In the Gentile churches the popular principle is more strongly marked than in the Jewish churches, but the organization of all appears, at first, to have been essentially the same. At a later period, all may have been more or less modified by peculiar circumstances, and a greater difference may necessarily appear in the government of different churches.

The conclusion therefore is, that the apostolical churches, generally, exercised the right of universal suffrage.

On the same principle, Paul and Barnabas may be presumed to have proceeded, when, in their missionary tour, they appointed presbyters in the churches where they visited, Acts 14: 23. The question here turns wholly upon the interpretation of the term, *χειροτονήσαντες*, "*when they had ordained*," or, as in the margin, "*when with lifting up of hands they had chosen them*."

If, according to the marginal reading, we understand, with our interpreters, the declaration to be, that the apostles made choice of these disciples, even this supposition does not, necessarily, exclude the members of the church themselves from participating in the election. It would imply rather, that they proceeded in the usual way, by calling the

¹⁶ Canningham's Trans., I, p. 56. ¹⁷ De Rebus Christ. Saec., I, § 87.

attention of the churches to the election of their own presbyters; just as in the instructions which Paul gives to Titus and to Timothy, respecting the appointment of presbyters and deacons for the churches of Ephesus and Crete respectively, the participation of these churches in the appointment is of necessity pre-supposed. For, "from the fact, that Paul, in committing to his pupils, as to Timothy and Titus, the organization of new churches, or of those which had fallen into many distractions, committed to them also the appointment of the presbyters and deacons, and directed their attention to the qualifications requisite for such offices,—*from this fact we are by no means to infer, that they themselves effected this alone, without the participation of the churches.* Much more, indeed, does the manner in which Paul himself is elsewhere wont to address himself to the whole church, and to claim the co-operation of the whole, authorize us to expect, that at least where there existed a church already established, he would have required their co-operation also in matters of common concern. But the supposition is certainly possible, that the apostle, in many cases, and especially in forming a new church, might think it best himself to propose to the church the persons best qualified for its officers, and such a nomination must naturally have had great weight. In the example of the family of Stephanus at Corinth, we see the members of the household first converted in the city, becoming, also, the first to fill the offices of the church.¹⁸ Neander also asserts, that this mode of election, by the whole body of the church, remained unimpaired in the third century.¹⁹

The foregoing views of Neander, together with the following extract from Mosheim, give us a clear view of the manner in which the elective franchise was exercised in the primitive church, through the first three centuries of

¹⁸ Apost. Kirch., Vol. I, c. 5, p. 194.

¹⁹ Neander's Allgem. Gesch., I, 323, seq. 340—342, 2d ed.

the Christian era. "To them (the multitude, or people) belonged the appointment of the bishop and presbyters, as well as of the inferior ministers,—with them resided the power of enacting laws, as also of adopting or rejecting whatever might be proposed in the general assemblies, and of expelling and again receiving into communion any depraved or unworthy members. In short, nothing whatever, of any moment, could be determined on, or carried into effect, without their knowledge and concurrence."²⁰

But the phrase itself, *χειροτονήσαντες*, may, with great probability, be understood to indicate that the appointment of these presbyters was by a public vote of the church.

1. *This is the appropriate meaning of the term, χειροτονῆν, which is here used.* It means, *to stretch out the hand, to hold up the hand*, as in voting; hence, *to vote; to give one's vote*, by holding up the hand. So it is rendered by Robinson, who, in the passage before us, translates it, *to choose by vote, to appoint*. Suidas also renders it by *ἐκλεξάμενοι, having chosen*. Such is the concurring authority of lexicographers.

2. *This rendering is sustained by the common use of the term by early Christian writers.* The brother who accompanied Paul in his agency to make charitable collections for the suffering Jews in Judea, was *chosen of the churches* for this service, where the same word is used, *χειροτονήθεις*. "It will become you," says Ignatius to the church at Philadelphia, "as the church of God, *to ordain, χειροτονῆσαι, to choose* some deacon to go there," i. e., to the church at Antioch.²¹

Again, to the church at Smyrna, "It will be fitting, and for the honor of God, that your church appoint, *χειροτονῆσαι, elect* some worthy delegate," &c.²²

The council of Neocaesarea directs that a presbyter should not be *chosen, μὴ χειροτονεῖσθω*, before he is thirty years

²⁰ De Rebus Christ. Saec., 1, §45. ²¹ Ad Phil. c. 10. ²² Ad Smyrn., c. 11.

old.²³ The council of Antioch forbids a bishop to be chosen, *χειροτονεῖσθω*, without the presence of the synod, and of the metropolitan;²⁴ and the apostolical canons direct that a bishop must be chosen, *χειροτονεῖσθω*, by two or three bishops.²⁵ Again, in the Greek version of the *Codex Ecclesiæ Africanæ*, the heading of the nineteenth canon is, that a bishop should not be chosen, *χειροτονεῖσθαι*, except by the multitude, *ἀπὸ πολλῶν*.²⁶

The above examples all relate, neither to an official appointment or commission granted by another, nor to an *ordination* or consecration, but to an actual election by a plurality of voters. Do they not justify the supposition, that Paul and Barnabas, like the apostles in the case of Matthias, and of the seven deacons, led the church to a popular election of their presbyters?

3. *This mode of appointment was the established usage of the churches*, to which it may be presumed that Paul and Barnabas adhered, in the election of these presbyters. The appointment of Matthias the apostle, of the seven deacons, and of the delegates of the churches, as we have already seen, was by a public vote of the churches. And the same continued to be the authorized mode of appointment at the close of the apostolical age; as we learn from the epistle of Clement, cited above, who also rebukes the church of Corinth for rejecting from their office those presbyters who had been chosen in this manner.²⁷ We have, then, evidence that this mode of election had been observed in the appointment of all, so far as we are informed, who had been invested with offices in the church. The testimony of Clement is, that the ministers of the churches established by the apostles were so appointed; from all which the inference is, that presbyters, like all other ecclesiastical officers, were appointed by vote of the church.

²³ Conc. Neocæsar., c. 11.

²⁴ Conc. Antioch., c. 19.

²⁵ Can. Apost., c. 1.

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the custom for the presbyters to propose one to supply any vacancy which occurred; but it remained for the church to ratify or to reject the nomination." ³⁵

Tertullian in his *Apology for Christians*, against the heathen, A. D. 198 or 205, says that the elders came into their office *by the testimony of the people*, that is, by the suffrage or election of the people. ³⁶ Their free and independent suffrages were the highest testimony which the people could give of their approbation of their elders.

The epistles of Ignatius, whether genuine or spurious, belong to the period of which we are now treating. This prelatial writer, as we have seen above, accords to the church the right of electing their own delegates.

Origen, in his last book against Celsus, about A. D. 240, speaks of the elders and rulers of the churches as *ἐκλεγόμενοι*, *chosen to their office*. In his sixth homily on Leviticus, he asserts that the presence of the people is required in the ordination of a priest; and the reason assigned for their intervention is to secure an impartial election, and the appointment to this office of one who might possess the highest qualifications for it. The whole passage implies the active co-operation of the people in the appointment of their ministers. ³⁷

Cyprian, A. D. 258, most fully accords to the people the right of suffrage in the appointment of their spiritual teachers, declaring that they have the fullest authority to choose those who are worthy of this office, and to refuse such as may be unworthy. This, according to this father,

³⁵ Neander, *Allgemein. Gesch.*, 1, p. 323, 2d ed.

³⁶ *Praesident probati quique seniores honorem istum non pretio, sed testimonio, adepti.*—*Apol.*, c. 39.

³⁷ *Requiritur enim in ordinando sacerdote et praesentia populi ut siant omnes, et certe sint, quia qui praestantior est ex omni populo, qui doctior, qui sanctior, qui in omni virtuti eminentior—ille eligitur ad sacerdotium, et hoc adstanto populo, ne qua postmodum, retractatio cuiquam, ne quis scrupulus resideret.*

was an *apostolic usage*, preserved by a *divine* authority in his day, and observed throughout the churches of Africa (*apud nos*), that a pastor, *sacerdos*, should be chosen publicly, in the presence of the people; and that by their decision thus publicly expressed, the candidate should be adjudged worthy to fill the vacant office, whether of deacon, presbyter or bishop. In accordance with these views, it was his custom, on all such occasions, to consult his clergy and the people before proceeding to ordain any one to the office of the ministry.³⁸

So universal was the right of suffrage, and so reasonable, that it attracted the notice of the emperor, Alexander Severus, who reigned from A. D. 222 to 235. In imitation of the custom of the Christians and Jews, in the appointment of their priests, as he says, he gave the people the right of rejecting the appointment of any procurator, or chief president of the provinces whom he might nominate to such a office.³⁹ Their votes, however, in these cases, were not merely testimonial, but really judicial and elective.

The authorities above cited indicate that the suffrages of the church were directed by a previous nomination of the clergy. But there are on record instances in which the people, of their own accord, and by acclamation, elected individuals to the office of bishop or presbyter, without any previous nomination. Ambrose, bishop of Milan, was

³⁸ Plebs obsequens praeceptis dominicis et Deum metuens, a peccatore praeposito separare se debet nec se ad sacrilegi sacerdotis sacrificia miscere, quando ipsa maxime habeat potestatem vel eligendi dignos sacerdotes, ut indignos recusandi. Quod et ipsum, videmus de divina auctoritate descendere ut sacerdos, plebe praesente, sub omnium oculis deligatur, et dignus atque idoneus publico iudicio ac testimonio comprobetur, — Diligentur, de traditione divina et apostolica observatione servandum est et tenendum quod apud nos quoque; et fere per provincias universas tenetur, ut ad ordinationes rite celebrandas ad eam plebem cui praepositus ordinatur, episcopi ejusdem provinciae proximi quique conveniant et episcopus deligatur plebe praesente. — Ep. 68.

³⁹ Lampridius, in vit. Alexandri Severi, c. 45.

elected in this manner, A. D. 374.⁴⁰ Martin, of Tours, A. D. 375, was appointed in the same manner.⁴¹ So also were Eustathius at Antioch, A. D. 310,⁴² Chrysostom at Constantinople, A. D. 398,⁴³ Eraclius at Hippo,⁴⁴ and Miletius at Antioch.⁴⁵ It is also observable that these examples belong to a later age, the fourth century. They are therefore important as evidence, that people continued even at this late period to retain their rights in these popular elections.

It has been asserted, that the people were denied the right of suffrage by the 4th canon of the council of Nice. But Bingham has clearly shown that the people were not excluded from their ancient privilege in this respect.⁴⁶ And both Riddle,⁴⁷ and bishop Pearson, as quoted by him, concur with Bingham in opinion on this subject. Indeed the assertion is sufficiently refuted, by the fact, that Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, and others, were elected by popular vote immediately after the session of that council.

Daillé sums up the evidence on this subject in the following terms: — "It is clear that in the primitive times they [popular elections and ordinations] depended partly on the people, and not wholly on the clergy; but every company of the faithful either chose their own pastors, or else had leave to consider and to approve of those that were proposed to them for that purpose. Pontius, a deacon of the church of Carthage, says that 'St. Cyprian, being yet a neophyte, was elected to the charge of pastor, and the degree of bishop by the judgment of God, and the favor of the people.'⁴⁸ St. Cyprian also tells us the same in several

⁴⁰ Paulin., vit. Ambros; Rufin., Hist. Eccl., Lib. 2, c. 11; Theodoret, Hist. Eccl., Lib. 4, c. 6, p. 666; Sozomen, Hist. Eccl., Lib. 6, c. 24.

⁴¹ Sulpic. Sev., Vit. e. Martini, c. 7. ⁴² Theodoret, Hist. Eccl., Lib. 1, c. 6.

⁴³ Socrat., Hist. Eccl., Lib. 6, c. 2. ⁴⁴ Augustin., 4, Ep. 110, al. 213.

⁴⁵ Theodoret, Hist. Eccl., Lib. 2, c. 27.

⁴⁶ Book 4, chap. 2, § 11.

⁴⁷ Christ. Antiq., p. 236.

⁴⁸ Judicio Dei, et plebis favore, ad officium sacerdotii, et episcopatus gradum adhuc neophytus, ut putabatur, novellus electus est. — *Pont. Diac. in vita Cypr.*

places. In his 52nd epistle, speaking of Cornelius, he says, 'That he was made bishop of Rome by the judgment of God, and of his Christ, by the testimony of the greatest part of the clergy, by the suffrage of the people who were there present, and by the college of pastors, or ancient bishops, all good and pious men.'⁴⁹

"It appears clear enough, both out of St. Hierome,⁵⁰ and by the acts of the council of Constantinople,⁵¹ and of Chalcedon,⁵² and also by the *Pontificale Romanum*,⁵³ and several other productions, that this custom continued a long time in the church."

This right in question is clearly admitted even in the Roman pontifical, in which the bishop, at the ordination of a priest, is made to say, "It was not without good reason that the fathers had ordained that the advice of the people should be taken in the election of those persons who were to serve at the altar; to the end that having given their assent to their ordination they might the more readily yield obedience to those who were so ordained."⁵⁴ This passage is cited by Daillé, who remarks, that an honest canon of Valencia very gravely proposed to the council of Trent, that this, and all such authorities should be blotted out; so that no trace or footstep of them should remain in future

⁴⁹ Factus est autem Cornelius episcopus, de Dei et Christi ejus judicio, de clericorum penè omnium testimonio, de plebis, quæ tunc affluit suffragio, et de sacerdotum antiquorum, et bonorum virorum collegio. — *Cyprian, Ep. 52*, p. 97.

⁵⁰ Hieron., Com. 10, in Ezech., c. 33, Tom. III., p. 935, et. Com. in Agg., p. 512, t. 5. et Com. 1, in Ep. ad Gal., p. 271, t. 6.

⁵¹ Conc. Const., 1, in Ep. ad Damas., p. 94 et 95, t. 1, Conc. Gener.

⁵² Conc. Chalced., act 11, p. 375, t. 2. Conc. Gen., et act. 16, p. 430, &c.

⁵³ Pontific. Rom. in Ordinat. Presbyter., fol. 38, vide supr. l. 1, c. 4.

⁵⁴ Neque enim frustra à patribus institutum, ut de electione illorum qui ad regimen altaris adhibendi sunt, consulatur etiam populus; quia de vita et conversatione præsentandi, quod nonnunquam ignoratur à pluribus, scitur à paucis; et necesse est, et facilius ei quis obedientiam exhibeat ordinatio cui assensum præbuerit ordinando. — *Pontif. Rom. De Ordinat. Pres.*, fol. 38.

for heretics to bring against them for having taken away this right!

Bingham,⁵⁵ and Chancellor King,⁵⁶ and multitudes of the most respectable writers in the communion of the Episcopal church, fully sustain the foregoing representations of the right of suffrage as enjoyed by the primitive churches. They are clearly supported by the late Dr. Burton,⁵⁷ and by Riddle, both of Oxford University, and by the best authorities both ancient and modern. "The mode of appointing bishops and presbyters," says Riddle, "has been repeatedly changed. Election by the people, for instance, has been discontinued. This is indeed, in the estimation of Episcopalians, a great improvement, but still, as they must allow, it is a change."⁵⁸

For what term of time the several churches continued in the full enjoyment of the right of suffrage, we are not distinctly informed. We can only say with Mosheim, "This power of appointing their elders continued to be exercised by the members of the church at large as long as primitive manners were retained entire; and those who ruled over the churches did not conceive themselves at liberty to introduce any deviation from the apostolic model."⁵⁹ The reader will find an able discussion of this whole subject, also, and an extended collection of authorities in Blondell's treatise, *De Plebis in Electionibus jure*.⁶⁰

II. Abridgement and final extinction of the right of suffrage.

Various causes began, as early as the third century, to invade the sovereign rights of the people, and to embarrass their free elective franchise. The final result of these changes was a total disfranchisement of the laity, and the

⁵⁵ Book 4, c. 6.

⁵⁶ Part I, c. 3 — c. 6.

⁵⁷ Church History, c. 12.

⁵⁸ Christ. Antiq., Preface, p. 76.

⁵⁹ De Rebus, Christ. Saec., 1, § 39.

⁶⁰ Apologia pro. St. Hieron., pp. 379 — 549.

substitution of an ecclesiastical despotism, in the place of the elective government of the primitive church. Of these changes one of the most effective was the attempt, by means of correspondence and ecclesiastical synods, to consolidate the churches in one church universal, to impose upon them an uniform code of laws, and establish an ecclesiastical polity administered by the clergy. The idea of a holy catholic church, and of an ecclesiastical hierarchy for the government of the same, was wholly a conception of the priesthood. Whatever may have been the motives with which the doctrine of the unity of the church was promulgated, it prepared the way for the overthrow of the popular government of the church.

Above all, the doctrine of the divine right of the priesthood aimed a fatal blow at the liberties of the people. The clergy were no longer the servants of the people, chosen by them to the work of the ministry, but a privileged order, like the Levitical priesthood, and, like them, by divine right invested with peculiar prerogatives. Elate with the pride of their divine commission, a degenerate and aspiring priesthood sought, by every means, to make themselves independent of the suffrages of the people. This independence they began by degrees to assert and to exercise. The bishop began, in the third century, to appoint his own deacons at pleasure, and other inferior orders of the clergy. In other appointments, also, his efforts began to disturb the freedom of the elections, and to direct them agreeably to his own will.⁶¹

And yet Cyprian, only about fifty years before, apologized to the laity and clergy of his diocese for appointing one Aurelius to the office of reader. In justification of this measure, he pleads the extraordinary virtues of the candidate, the urgent necessity of the case, and the impos-

⁶¹ Pertsch. Kirch. Gesch. drit. Jahrhundert., pp. 439—452. Planck, Gesell. Verfassung, 1, 183.

sibility of consulting them, as he was wont to do on all such occasions.⁶² Such was the progress of Episcopal usurpation within the short period of half a century. By the middle of the fourth century, elections by the people were nearly lost;⁶³ and from the beginning of the fifth century, the bishop proceeded to claim the appointment even of the presbyters, together with the absolute control of all ecclesiastical offices subordinate to his own episcopate. But down to the fourth century, the bishops were not at liberty ever to license one to perform the duties of a presbyter, without first obtaining the approbation of the people. Such at least was still the rule in many places.⁶⁴

Against these encroachments of ecclesiastical ambition and power, the people continued to oppose a firm but ineffectual resistance. They asserted, and in a measure maintained, their primitive right of choosing their own spiritual teachers.⁶⁵ The usage of the churches of Africa has been already mentioned. Examples are given by Böhmer,⁶⁶ in evidence that this rite was still observed in the churches of Spain and of Rome.⁶⁷ Later still, in the fourth century, an instance occurred in the Eastern church in Cappadocia, of the controlling influence of these popular elections. The people, after having been divided

⁶² In ordinationibus clericis, Fratres carissimi, solemus vos ante consulere, et mores ac merita singulorum, communi consilio penderari. Ep. 33.

⁶³ Pertsch., 4, Jahrhundert., p. 263.

⁶⁴ Riddle's Eccl. Chron., A. D. 400. Planck, Vol. I, p. 183. Euseb. Eccl. Hist., 6, 43.

⁶⁵ Gieseler, Vol. I, 272. For a more full and detailed account of these changes of ecclesiastical polity, and of the means by which they were introduced, the reader is referred to the first volume of J. G. Planck's *Gesch. der Christ. Kirch., Gesellschaft-Verfassung*, Bd. I, 149—212, 433, seq.

⁶⁶ Christ. Kirch. Alterthumswissenschaft, I, p. 144, seq.

⁶⁷ Presbyterio vel episcopatu, si eum cleri ac plebis ronaverit *electio*, non immerito societur.—Siricius, bishop of Rome, A. D. 384. Ep. I, ad Himer., c. 10.

in their choice between different candidates, united their suffrages in the election of an individual high in office in the state, who had not even been baptized. He accordingly received this ordinance at the hands of the bishops present, and was duly invested with his office. In the Western church, the election of Martin of Tours, A. D. 375, above-mentioned, was carried by the popular voice, against the decided disapprobation of the bishops present. Ambrose, bishop of Milan, A. D. 374, was also appointed by the unanimous acclamation of the multitude, previous even to his baptism. On the other hand, there are on record, instances in the fourth, and even in the fifth century, when the appointment of a bishop was effectually *resisted*, by the refusal of the people to ratify the nomination of the candidate to a vacant see.⁶⁸

But notwithstanding all these examples, in which the people successfully asserted their ancient right of suffrage, it became, as early as the fifth century, little else than an empty name. Their elections degenerated into a tumultuous and unequal contest with a crafty and aspiring hierarchy, who had found means so to trammel up and control the elective franchise, as practically to direct, at pleasure, all ecclesiastical appointments. The rule had been established by decree of council, and often repeated, requiring the presence and *unanimous concurrence of all the provincial bishops* in the election and ordination of one to the office of bishop. This afforded them a convenient means of defeating any popular election, by an affected disagreement among themselves. The same canonical authority had made the *concurrence of the metropolitan* necessary to the validity of any appointment. His veto was accordingly another efficient expedient to baffle the suffrages of the people, and

⁶⁸ Greg. Naz., Orat. 10. Bingham, B. IV, c. 1, § 3. Planck, I, 440, n. 19.



to constrain them into a reluctant acquiescence with the will of the clergy.⁶⁹

Elections to ecclesiastical offices were also disturbed by the interference of secular influence from without, in consequence of that disastrous union of church and state, which was formed in the fourth century, under Constantine the Great.

"During this century," the fourth, "1. The emperors convened, and presided in, general councils; 2. Confirmed their decrees; 3. Enacted laws relative to ecclesiastical matters by their own authority; 4. Pronounced decisions concerning heresies and controversies; 5. Appointed bishops; 6. Inflicted punishment on ecclesiastical persons."

"Hence arose complaints that the bishops had conceded too much to the emperors, while, on the other hand, some persons maintained that the emperors had left too much on the hands of the bishops. The bishops certainly did possess too much power and influence, to the prejudice of the other clergy, and especially to the disadvantage of Christians at large.

"Thus the emperor and the bishops share the chief government of the church between them. But the limits of their authority were not well defined. Great part of the power formerly possessed by the general body of Christians, the laity, had passed into the hands of the civil governor."⁷⁰

Agitated and harrassed by these discordant elements, the popular assemblies for the election of men to fill the highest offices of the holy ministry, became scenes of tumult and disorder that would disgrace a modern political canvass. "Go and witness the proceedings at our public

⁶⁹ Conc. Nic. c. 4. Conc. Antioch, c. 19. Carthag. IV, c. 1, 22. Planck, Vol. I, pp. 433—452.

⁷⁰ Riddle's Chronology, pp. 70, 71.

festivals, especially those in which, according to rule, the elections of ecclesiastical officers are held. One supports one man, another, another, and the reason is, that all overlook that which they ought to consider, the qualifications, intellectual and moral, of the candidate. Their attention is turned to other points, by which their choice is determined. One is in favor of a candidate of noble birth; another, of a man of wealth, who will not need to be supported by the revenues of the church; a third votes for one who has come over from some opposite party; a fourth gives his influence in favor of some relative or friend; while another is gained by the flatteries of a demagogue."⁷¹ Repeated notices of similar disturbances occur in the ecclesiastical writers of that period.⁷²

To correct these disorders, various but ineffectual expedients were adopted at different times and places. The council of Laodicea, A. D. 361, c. 13, excluded the multitude, *τοῖς ὄχλοις*, *the rabble*, from taking part in the choice of persons for the sacred office, apparently with the design of preventing these abuses, without excluding the better portion of the laymen from participating in these elections. The expedient, however, produced but little effect.

In the Latin church, and especially in that of Africa, an attempt was made to restore order and simplicity in these elections by means of *interventors*, or *visitors*, whose duty it was to visit the vacant diocese, and use his influence with the clergy and people to harmonize their discordant

⁷¹ De Sacerdot., Lib. 3, c. 15.

⁷² August., Ep. 155. Synesii, Ep. 67. Sidon, Apollinar., Lib. IV, Ep. 25, and other passages collected by Baronius, Annal., 303, n. 22, seq., and in Baluzii Miscell., tom. 2. Ammianus Marcellinus gives the following representation of the unholy contests of the two rival candidates, Damasus and Ursinus, for appointment to the Episcopal see at Rome:—"Supra humanum modum and rapiendam episcopatus sedem ardentes, scissis studiis asperime conflicti bantur, ad usque mortis, vulnerumque discrimina adjumentis utriusque progressis. Et in certatione superaverat Damasus parte quæ ec favelat instante."—Lib. 28, Ep. 3.

interests, and prepare the way for a quiet and regular election. By this means, the visitor had a fair opportunity, as Bingham justly remarks, "to ingratiate himself with the people, and promote his own interest among them, instead of that of the church."⁷³ This measure, though supported by Symmachus,⁷⁴ in the sixth century, and by Gregory the Great,⁷⁵ failed to produce the desired effect; and seems neither to have been generally adopted nor long continued.

Justinian, in the sixth century, sought, with no better success, to remedy the evils in question, by limiting the elective franchise to a mixed aristocracy, composed of the *clergy*, and the *chief men* of the city. These were jointly to nominate three candidates, declaring under oath, that, in making the selection, they had been influenced by no sinister motive. From these three the ordaining person was to ordain the one whom he judged best qualified.⁷⁶ But it was not defined who should be included among the chief men, and the result was the loss of the people's rights, and an increase of the factions which the measure was intended to prevent. The council of Arles, A. D. 452, c. 54, in like manner, ordered the *bishops to nominate three candidates*, from whom the clergy and the people should make the election; and that of Barcelona, A. D. 593, ordered the *clergy and people* to make the nomination, and the *metropolitan and bishops* were to determine the election by lot.

But even these ineffectual efforts to restore, in some measure, the right of the people, sufficiently show to what extent it was already lost. Indeed, the bishops had already assumed, in some instances, the independent and exclusive right themselves of appointing spiritual officers.⁷⁷ The

⁷³ Book II, c. 15, § 1. Comp. Book IV, c. 11, § 7.

⁷⁴ Ep. 5, c. 6.

⁷⁵ Ep. Lib. 9. Ep. 16.

⁷⁶ Justin, Novell., 123, c. 1, 137, c. 2d. Cod. Lib. 1, tit. 3. De Episcop. leg. 42.

⁷⁷ Sidon, Apollinar., Lib. IV, Ep. 25.

emperor Valentinian III complains of Hilary of Arles, that he unworthily ordained some in direct opposition to the will of the people; and when they refused those whom they had not chosen, that he contracted an armed body, and by military power forcibly thrust into office the ministers of the gospel of peace.⁷⁸ Leo the Great, A. D. 450, asserts the right of the people to elect their spiritual rulers.⁷⁹

The government of the church, from a pure democracy, had changed, first into an ambitious aristocracy, and then into a more oppressive oligarchy, who, assuming practically the sentiment of a crafty tyrant, οὐκ ἀγαθὸν πολυκοίραν(η),⁸⁰ directed their assaults against the most sacred principle both of civil and religious liberty,—the right of every corporate body to choose their own rulers and teachers. This extinction of religious freedom was not effected in the church universally at the same time, nor in every place by the same means. Oppressed by violence, overreached by stratagem, or awed into submission by superstition, the churches severally yielded the contest at different and somewhat distant intervals. In Rome, the rights of the people were recognized under Cœlestia, A. D. 422,⁸¹ and Leo the Great, A. D. 440, which, as we have seen, Justinian attempted to restore in the century following. In Gaul, these rights were not wholly lost until the fifth,⁸² and even the sixth century.⁸³

The doctrine of a divine guidance from the Spirit of God to the clergy, had its influence also in completing the subjugation of the people. This vain conceit, by ceaseless

⁷⁸ Valentinian III, Nov. XXIV, ad calcem Cod. Theodos.

⁷⁹ Qui praelecturus omnibus, ab omnibus eligatur. Ep. 89. Comp. Ep. 84, c. 5.

⁸⁰ Iliad, II, 204. Paraphrased by Pope, in the following lines:

Be silent, wretch, and think not here allowed
That worst of tyrants, an usurping crowd.—POPE.

⁸¹ Ep. 2, c. 5.

⁸² Sidon, Apollinar.; Lib. IV, Ep. 25.

⁸³ Conc. Orleans, A. D. 549, c. 10.



repetition of bishops and councils, became an unquestionable dogma of the church. Once established, it had great influence in bringing the people into passive submission to their spiritual oppressors. Resistance to such authority under the infallible guidance of the Spirit of God, was rebellion against high heaven, which the laity had not the impiety to maintain.

"Thus every thing was changed in the church. At the beginning it was a society of brethren; and now an absolute monarchy is reared in the midst of them. All Christians were priests of the living God, 1 Pet. 2: 9, with humble pastors for their guidance. But a lofty head is uplifted from the midst of these pastors. A mysterious voice utters words full of pride; an iron hand compels all men, small and great, rich and poor, freemen and slaves, to take the mark of its power. The holy and primitive equality of souls is lost sight of. Christians are divided into two strangely unequal classes. On the one side, a separate class of priests daring to usurp the name of the church, and claiming to be possessed of peculiar privileges in the sight of the Lord. On the other, timid flocks, reduced to a blind and passive submission; a people gagged and silenced, and delivered over to a proud caste."⁸⁴

The interference of the secular power with ecclesiastical appointments has been already mentioned. The civil magistrate often exercised the same arbitrary power in these matters which the priesthood had usurped over the people, so that the oppressor became in turn the oppressed. This secular interference began with Constantine. Both in the Eastern and the Western church, it was often the means of disturbing and overruling the appointment of ecclesiastical officers, and finally itself completed the extinction of religious liberty. Valentinian III, A. D. 445, for example, enacted, that all bishops of the Western em-

⁸⁴ D'Aubigné's *Hist. of the Reformation*, I, p. 31.

pire should obey the bishop of Rome, and should be bound to appear before him at his summons.⁸⁵ Constantius appointed Liberius bishop of Rome, A. D. 352, and the Gothic kings in the sixth century exercised the same arbitrary power over the churches of France and Spain.⁸⁶

In the Eastern church, Theodosius I also appointed Nectarius bishop of Constantinople, A. D. 381,⁸⁷ and Theodosius II, in the same summary manner, appointed Proilus, A. D. 434, to succeed Maximian in the same place. The church sometimes protested with great vehemence against these encroachments of secular power, of which we have a remarkable example in the sixth canon of the council of Paris, A. D. 557. "Seeing that ancient custom and the regulations of the church are neglected, we desire that no bishop be consecrated against the will of the citizens. And only such person shall be considered eligible to this dignity, who may be appointed, not by command of the prince, but by the election of the people and clergy; which election must be confirmed by the metropolitan and the other bishops of the province. Any one who may enter upon this office *by the mere authority of the king*, shall not be recognized by the other bishops; and if any bishop should recognize him, he must himself be deposed from his office."⁸⁸ The eighth council of Rome, also, A. D. 853, forbade, on pain of excommunication, "all lay persons whatsoever, even princes themselves, to meddle in the election or promotion of any patriarch, metropolitan, or any other bishop whatever, declaring withal, that it is not fit that lay persons should have any thing at all to do in these matters; it becoming them rather to be quiet, and patiently to attend until such time as the election of the bishop who

⁸⁵ Riddle's Eccl. Chron., p. 103.

⁸⁶ Simonis, Vorlesungen über die Christlichen, Allerthümer, p. 106.

⁸⁷ Böhmer's Alterthumswissenschaft, Vol. I, p. 151.

⁸⁸ Conc. Paris, c. 8.



is to be chosen, be regularly finished by the college of the church."⁸⁹

Such demands for the institution of *apostolical* and *canonical elections*, as they were called,⁹⁰ were, however, but rarely made, and never with success. The clergy were brought to bow down to an usurpation more absolute and despotic than that by which they at first wrested from the laity the rights, which, in their turn, they were compelled so reluctantly to resign to the secular power, until at length the pope, that prince of tyrants, became the supreme arbiter of all power, whether ecclesiastical or secular. Innocent III, at the close of the twelfth century, described himself as "the successor of St. Peter; set up by God to govern not only the church but the whole world. As God," said he, "has placed two great luminaries in the firmament, the one to rule the day, and the other to give light by night, so has he established two great powers, the pontifical and the royal; and as the moon receives her light from the sun, so does royalty borrow its splendor from the papal authority!"

REMARKS.

The right of suffrage involves the great principles and rights of a popular government. These rights and privileges the apostles, under the guidance of wisdom from on high, studiously sought to protect, in framing the constitution and government which they gave to the churches; as the following remarks may serve to show.

⁸⁹ Neminem laicorum principum, vel Potentum semet inserere electioni vel promotioni Patriarchæ, vel Metropolitæ, aut cujuslibet episcopi, &c. præsertim cum nullam in talibus potestatem quenquam potestativorum, vel ceterorum laicorum habere conveniat, sed potius silere, ac attendere sibi, usque quod regulariter à collegio ecclesiæ suscipiat finem electio futuri pontificis.—*Conc. 8. Con. 12, t. 3, Conc. p. 282.*

⁹⁰ Gregory Naz., Orat. 21.

1. The right of suffrage is the first element of a popular government, in the church.

The right to elect our rulers and teachers, involves the right to adopt our own form of government, to frame our constitution, to enact our laws ; to exercise the prerogatives and enjoy the privileges of a free and independent body. The enjoyment of this right, is freedom ; the loss of it, slavery.

2. The right to elect their own pastors and teachers is the inherent right of every church.

If it be true, that all men are endowed, by their Creator, with certain unalienable rights, among which are " life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," then much more is liberty of conscience, and the pursuit of future blessedness, the inherent, unalienable right of man. What is the life that now is, to that which is to come ; or the happiness of earth, to the bliss of heaven ? Such are the religious to the civil rights of any people, all of which are involved in the enjoyment of the elective franchise, and lost to a disfranchised laity. This consideration was lately urged in the hearing of the writer, with great pertinency and force, by a speaker in the House of Lords, on a motion relating to the religious liberty of the church of Scotland. " The choice of a pastor," the noble marquis proceeded to say, " was really a measure of more importance, and, by the members of that church, was regarded as an event more interesting than the election of a member of Parliament ; for it affected their religious interests,—interests, to them and to their children, high as heaven, and lasting as eternity."

3. The right of suffrage preserves a just balance of power between the church and clerical order,—the laity and the clergy. The sacred office of the clergy, coupled with



learning and talents, gives them, under any form of government, a controlling influence. If to all this be added the exclusive right of making and executing the laws, and of electing the officers, the balance of power between the clergy and the people is destroyed. The restraints and checks which the clergy ought to feel against the exercise of arbitrary power are removed. The history of the church sufficiently shows that the dangerous prerogatives of prelatical power cannot, with safety, be entrusted to any body of men, however great or good. Accordingly, as in all free governments, the sovereign power is vested in the people, so in the primitive church, this great law of religious as well as of civil liberty was carefully observed. The people were made the depositaries of the sovereign power. The enactment of the laws and the appointment of their officers belonged to them.⁹¹

4. The loss of this right is the extinction of religious liberty.

The free Church of Scotland, by their late secession, have had the magnanimity to resign the heritage of their fathers, and to go out from the sanctuary where their fathers worshipped, taking joyfully the spoiling of their goods, rather than submit to the loss of their religious rights. In the manifesto, which they have published, as their declaration of independence, they complain that their religious liberty has been invaded by the civil courts; whereas the church of Christ is, and of right ought to be, free, and independent of all spiritual jurisdiction from the state. We subjoin an extract from this manifesto, which clearly sets forth the wrongs that they must suffer under this spiritual bondage to which they have nobly refused to bow down themselves. The specification of their grievances is made in the following terms :

⁹¹ Riddle, *Eccl. Chr.*, p. 13. Euseb., *Eccl. Hist.*, Lib. 5, 24.

1. That the courts of the church as now established, and members thereof, are liable to be coerced by the civil courts in the exercise of their spiritual functions; and in particular, in their admission to the office of the holy ministry, and the constitution of the pastoral relation, and that they are subject to be compelled to intrude ministers on reclaiming congregations in opposition to the fundamental principles of the church, and their views of the word of God, and to the liberties of Christ's people.

2. That the said civil courts have power to interfere with and interdict the preaching of the gospel, and administration of ordinances as authorized and enjoined by the church courts of the establishment.

3. That the said civil courts have power to suspend spiritual censures pronounced by the church courts of the establishment against ministers and probationers of the church, and to interdict their execution as to spiritual effects, functions, and privileges.

4. That the said civil courts have power to reduce and set aside the sentences of the church courts of the establishment, deposing ministers from the office of the holy ministry, and depriving probationers of their license to preach the gospel, with reference to the spiritual status, functions, and privileges of such ministers and probationers,—restoring them to the spiritual office and status of which the church courts had deprived them.

5. That the said civil courts have power to determine on the right to sit as members of the supreme and other judicatories of the church by law established, and to issue interdicts against sitting and voting therein, irrespective of the judgment and determination of the said judicatories.

6. That the said civil courts have power to supersede the majority of a church court of the establishment, in regard to the exercise of its spiritual functions as a church

court, and to authorize the minority to exercise the said functions, in opposition to the court itself and to the superior judicatories of the establishment.

7. That the said civil courts have power to stay processes of discipline pending before courts of the church by law established, and to interdict such courts from proceeding therein.

8. That no pastor of a congregation can be admitted into the church courts of the establishment and allowed to rule, as well as to teach, agreeably to the institution of the office by the Head of the church, nor to sit in any of the judicatories of the church, inferior or supreme, and that no additional provision can be made for the exercise of spiritual discipline among members of the church, though not affecting any patrimonial interests, and no alteration introduced in the state of pastoral superintendence and spiritual discipline in any parish without the coercion of a civil court.

All which jurisdiction and power on the part of the said civil courts severally above specified, whatever proceedings may have given occasion to its exercise, is, in our opinion, in itself inconsistent with Christian liberty,—with the authority which the Head of the church hath conferred on the church alone.

5. The free exercise of the elective franchise is one of the most effectual means of guarding against the introduction of unworthy men into the ministry.

The common people best know the private character of the minister. They have a deep interest in it. They seek the spiritual welfare of themselves and their children, in the selection of their pastor. These are precisely the considerations assigned for continuing to the people the right of election in the ancient church, after the rise of Episco-

pacy.⁹² On the contrary, he who has a living at his disposal, is often ignorant of the true character of him who seeks a preferment. A thousand sinister motives may bias his judgment. He may be the most unsuitable man possible for such a trust.⁹³ In a word, who does not know that the curse of a graceless ministry has ever rested upon the church, to a greater or less extent, wherever they have not enjoyed the right of electing their own pastors? The rich and quiet livings of an establishment, especially if coupled with the authority, the distinction and emoluments of the Episcopal office, will ever be an object of ambition to worldly men. "Make me a bishop," said an ancient idolater, "make me a bishop, and I will surely be a Christian."

6. The free enjoyment of the elective franchise is one of the best means of guarding the church against the inroads of error.

The Puseyism of the day is a delusion of the priesthood. The writer has often been assured in England that few, comparatively, of the common people are led away by it. And in this country we have lately seen the laity nobly struggling against diocesan despotism, to resist it. So it has ever been; the delusions and heresies that have over-

⁹² It was, according to Cyprian, a divine tradition and apostolical custom, observed by the African church, and throughout almost all the provinces, that the election is to be performed in the presence of the people of the place, who fully know every man's life, and, in their very intimate acquaintance, have carefully observed his habitual conversation. *Episcopus deligatur, plebe præsente, quæ singulorum vitam plenissime novit, et uniuscujusque actum de ejus conversatione perspexerit.*—*Coram omni synagoga jubet Deus constitui sacerdotem, id est, instruit atque ostendit ordinationes sacerdotales non nisi, sub populi assistentis conscientia fieri oportere ut, plebe præsente, vel delegantur malorum crimina, vel bonorum merita prædicentur.*—*Quod utique idcirco tam diligenter et caute, convocata plebe, tota gerebatur, ne quis ad altaris ministerium, vel ad sacerdotalem locum indignus obreperet.*—*Cyprian, Ep. 68.*

⁹³ Tracts for the Times, No. 59, p. 413.

run the church, have originated with the clergy.⁹⁴ But in a ministry having no dependence upon a people, will be found, if any where, irreligious, speculative, dangerous men, who, caring little for their flocks, will substitute their own delusions,⁹⁵ for the simple truths which an intelligent and virtuous people delight to hear, and which a godly ministry, such as they would choose, would desire to preach. Leave the choice of the ministry, then, in the hands of the people. They will most carefully seek for one who is sound in the faith, and honest in the sacred cause; they will soonest reject one who may seek to prevent the truth of God. In the laity alone is there safety, who will see that the church is furnished with a ministry who shall be the best defenders of the faith, by the authority of their learning and the piety of their lives.

7. The right of suffrage promotes a mutual endearment between pastor and people; and the spiritual edification of the church. They receive instruction, with affectionate interest and confidence, from the lips of the preacher whom

⁹⁴ "If you were to take the *great mass of the people* of England, you would find a burst of righteous indignation against them (the Tractarians). They would say, If we are to have popery, let us have honest old popery, at once. If you are right, you do not go far enough; and if you are wrong, you go too far"—*Rev. Mr. Sewell, cited in Letters to the Laity.*

⁹⁵ "When the prerogative and pre-eminence of any single person in the church began to be in esteem, not a few who failed in their attempts of attaining it, to revenge themselves on the church, made it their business to invent and propagate pernicious heresies. So did Thebulis, at Jerusalem, Euseb., lib. 4, cap. 22, and Valentinus, Tertul. ad. Valentin., cap. 4, and Marcion, at Rome, Epiphan. Hæres, 42. Montanus fell into his dotage on the same account; so did Novitianus, at Rome, Euseb., lib. 7, cap. 43, and Arius, at Alexandria. Hence is that censure of them by Lactantius, lib. 4, cap. 30, 'Ii quorum fides fuit lubrica, cum Deum nosse se et colere simularent, augendis opibus et honori studentes, affectabant maximum sacerdotium, et a potioribus victi, secedere cum suffragatoribus maluerunt, quam eos ferre præpositos quibus concupierant ipsi ante præponi.'—*Owen, Works, Vol. XX, p. 169.*

they have appointed over themselves, the man of their choice; while he, in turn, speaks to them in the fulness and confidence of reciprocal love. The ministry of a priesthood, on the other hand, which is imposed upon a people, is a hireling service, in which neither speaker nor hearer can have equal interest.

Finally. It produces the most efficient ministry.

This is a general conclusion, drawn from the foregoing considerations, and a position established by the whole history of the church. It contradicts all history, and all the principles of human conduct, to suppose, that an independent establishment, in which the priesthood are settled down at ease in their livings, can have the efficacy and moral power of a clergy, the tenure of whose office depends upon their activity and usefulness.



CHAPTER V.

DISCIPLINE BY THE CHURCHES.

THE discipline of the apostolical churches was administered by the body of believers collectively; and continued to be so directed until the third or fourth century. About this period of time, the simple and efficient discipline of the primitive church was exchanged for a complicated and oppressive system of penance administered by the clergy. But the church itself possesses the only legitimate authority for the administration of their discipline. They are a voluntary association. They have the right to enact their own laws, and prescribe such conditions of membership with themselves as they may judge expedient, agreeably to the word of God. The right to administer ecclesiastical discipline was guaranteed to the churches from their first organization under the apostles; but was finally lost by the usurpation of the priesthood under the Episcopal hierarchy.

I. The right to administer ecclesiastical discipline was originally vested in the church itself.

The argument in support of this proposition is derived:

1. From the Scriptures.
2. From the early Fathers.
3. From the authority of ecclesiastical writers.
4. From the fact, that the entire government of the church was vested in that body itself.

1. The argument from Scripture.

Our Lord himself is generally supposed to teach, in Matt. 18: 15—18, that the public discipline of offenders should be administered by authority of the church.

These instructions are understood to have been given prospectively, and to contain the rules by which the discipline of the Christian church should be administered. But whether given prospectively with reference to the Christian church which was about to be established, or designed to exhibit the proper mode of procedure in the discipline of the Jewish synagogue, they doubtless develop the *principle* on which ecclesiastical censure should be conducted under the Christian dispensation. Lightfoot and Vitringa have clearly shown that the directions of our Lord, in this instance, accord with the established usage of the synagogue, which, as we have already seen, was the pattern of the primitive church, both in its government and forms of worship. Vitringa has shown, at length, that this sentence was to be pronounced by a popular vote in public assembly, and that the same course of procedure was to be the rule of the Christian church. The church therefore, collectively, like the synagogue,¹ is the ecclesiastical court of impeachment for the trial of offences. If private remonstrance proves ineffectual, the case is to be brought before the church in public assembly convened; to be adjudged by a public vote of that body, after the manner of the Jewish synagogue.

This rule of discipline was also established in the Christian church by *apostolical authority*.

We have on record one instance of a trial before the church which was instituted by the command of the apostle Paul, and conducted throughout agreeably to his instructions. A Christian convert in Corinth, and a member of

¹ Vitringa, *De Synagoga Vet.*, Lib. 3, p. 1, c. 9. Augusti's *Denkwürdigkeiten*, Vol. IX, p. 43, seq. Pfaff, *De Originibus Juris Eccles.*, p. 99.



the church which had recently been established in that city, had maintained an incestuous connexion with his father's wife. This shocking sin, unexampled even among the Gentiles, the apostle rebukes with righteous abhorrence. The transgressor ought to be put away from among them; and, uniting with them as if present in their assembly convened for the purpose, he resolves to deliver him unto Satan, in the name, and with the power of the Lord Jesus Christ, i. e., by the help and with the authority of the Lord, 1 Cor. 5: 3—5.

Upon this passage we remark:—

1. The decision was not an official act of the apostle, a sentence pronounced by his authority alone. It was the act of the church. Absent in body, but present in spirit with them when assembled together, the apostle pronounces his decision *as if acting and co-operating with them*. By this parenthetical sentence, "When ye are gathered together and my spirit," he indicates the intervention and co-operation of the church in the sentence pronounced upon the transgressor. "The apostle," says De Wette,² "qualifies the earnestness with which he speaks in the third verse, by reference, first, to the authority of Christ, and secondly, to the co-operation of the church; agreeably to the republican spirit of ancient Christianity, personating himself as present in spirit in their assembly." Such also is Neander's interpretation of the passage. "When the apostle speaks of an excommunication from the church, he regards himself as united in spirit with the whole church, 1 Cor. 5: 4, setting forth the rule, that their action is requisite in all such concerns of general interest."³ Even in this very chapter, he refuses himself to judge in such cases, submitting them to the church themselves.—"What have I to do to judge them that are without?" i. e., men of the world,

¹ Comment. ad locum.

² Allgem. Gesch., 1, p. 292. Comp. p. 356. Apost. Kirch., 1, pp. 319, 320.

"Do not ye judge them that are within? i. e., members of the church. "But them that are without God judgeth," *ἡ κρίσις*, or rather *ἡ κρίσις*, *will judge*, which is the approved reading. "Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person," vs. 12, 13.

The severe censure with which the apostle reflects upon the Corinthians for tolerating the offender so long, shows that the responsibility rested with them. They should have put away this offence from among them.⁴ But if it was wholly the act of the apostle, why censure them for neglecting to do what they had no right or authority to do? Are the members of the Episcopal church to be blamed for the total neglect of discipline in their communion, while the clergy have the sole power of administering discipline? Neither could the Corinthians deserve censure, except they had authority to exercise the discipline which they neglected. Both here, and in 2 Cor. 2: 3—11, the apostle refers distinctly to their neglect in this matter.

Again, in 2 Cor. 2: 6, he speaks of the excommunication as the act of the church. The punishment was inflicted, *ὕπὸ τῶν πλείονων*, "of many," i. e., by *the many*, the majority. Bilioth paraphrases this in connection with the preceding verse, as follows:—"Whether he, or the offender, have caused grief to me, comes not into consideration. It is not that *I* must suffer for him, but *you*; at least, a part of you; for I will not be unjust, and charge you *all* with having been indifferent concerning his transgressions. Paul proceeds still further, v. 6; he calls those who had reprehended the transgressor *the majority*, who had condemned his vice and been grieved by it."

Once more, the apostle does not himself restore the transgressor, now penitent for his sin; *but exhorts the Corinthians to do it*. But if the church have themselves the

⁴ Mosheim, *Institutiones Majores*, P. II, c. 3, § 14.

authority to receive him again to their communion, had they not also this right of censure? "The punishment which they had extended over him, by excluding him from their communion, is declared to be sufficient, since he had reformed himself, (on *ἵκανόν*, see Winer, p. 297.) The apostle himself, therefore, proposes, v. 7, that they should again treat him in a friendly manner, and comfort him, in order that he might not be worn away by over-much grief." ⁵ In v. 10, again, he signifies his readiness to assent to their decisions; whom they forgive, he forgives also; and that, because *they* had forgiven him.

2. *This sentence was an actual excommunication; not a judicial visitation analogous to that upon Simon Magus, Acts 13: 11.* By this sentence he was removed from the church of Christ, and reduced to his former condition as a heathen man. This, according to the most approved commentators, is the full meaning of the phrase, *παράδοῦναι τῷ Σατανᾷ*. The world, in the angelology of the Jews, and agreeably to the Scriptures, comprises two great divisions; the kingdom of Christ, and the kingdom of Satan. By this sentence of excommunication, the incestuous person is transferred from the visible kingdom of our Lord, to the dominion of Satan, and in this sense delivered unto him.

3. *The ultimate object of this discipline was the reformation of the offender; the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.* It was not a *penance*, an arbitrary, prelatical infliction of pains and penalties, but a disciplinary process for the spiritual good of the individual.

4. *It is questionable, perhaps, whether the sentence was accompanied with the judicial infliction of any disease whatever.* Many of the most respectable commentators

⁵ Bilioth, Comment. ad locum.

understand, by the delivering "to Satan, for *the destruction of the flesh*," the visitation of some wasting malady. The phraseology doubtless admits of such a construction, and the language of the apostle on other occasions seems to favor it. Com. 1 Cor. 11: 30. 1 Tim. 1: 20. But the consequences of this excommunication were of themselves sufficient, it may be, to justify this strong expression, *the destruction of the flesh*. To the Jews, under the old dispensation, and to primitive Christians under the new, it was no light matter. It was a withering curse. It was a *civil death*; a total exclusion from kindred, from society, from all the charities of life, which Christians were wont to reciprocate even with the heathen.⁶ This construction, again, is given to the passage by commentators of high authority.

But is any *bodily disease* intended? Flesh, *σάρξ*, often denotes *the carnal propensities*, the *sinful appetites* and *passions*. Gal. 5: 17, 19. 6: 8. Eph. 2: 3. Col. 2: 11. The subjugation, the putting away of these, is distinctly implied in the ultimate design of this discipline,—the salvation of the spirit,—and is not this all that is intended in the *ὀλεθρον τῆς σαρκός*, *the destruction of the flesh*? However that may be, it is not essential to our present purpose. Whatever may have been, to the guilty person, the consequences of the sentence of excommunication, it proceeded from the church at the instigation of the apostle.

An excommunication somewhat similar is described briefly in 1 Cor. 16: 22,—“If any man love not the Lord

⁶ Josephus relates, that those who were excommunicated from the Essenes often died after a miserable manner, and therefore were, from motives of compassion, received again when at the point of death. In this instance, their oath obliged them to refuse such food as he might find; but was not the case equally as bad, when all were bound, not only to refuse him subsistence, but all expressions of kindness and charity? Comp. Jahn's *Archæology*, § 528. Horne's *Introduction*, B. II, c. 3, § 4. Neander's *Allgem. Gesch.*, I, 373, 2d edit.

Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maran-atha." The word anathema corresponds to the Hebrew אָנָתְמָה, which denotes either any thing given up to God, or devoted to destruction. It was a form of excommunication familiar to the Jews, which was pronounced publicly upon the offender, and excluded him from all communion whatever with his countrymen!⁷ Such was the *anathema*, a solemn sentence of excommunication, publicly pronounced upon the transgressor. The phrase, *Maran-atha*, is the Syro-Chaldaic מָרָנָא אָתָה, *The Lord cometh*, i. e., *to judgment*. The whole, taken together, implies that the transgressor is separated from the communion of the church, and abandoned to the just judgment of God. All that the apostle seems to demand of the Corinthians respecting the offender is, that they should exclude him from their society, so that he might cease to be a member of the church, verses 12, 13. He pronounces no further judgment upon him, but expressly refers to the future judgment of God.

In review, therefore, of these important passages, several things are worthy of particular remark.

1. The sentence of exclusion proceeded not from the pastor of the church, but *from the church collectively*.

2. The excommunication is styled a punishment, *ἐπιτίμια*. But the apostle distinguishes it both from the civil penalties which attended the bans of excommunication among the Jews, and from the judicial sentence of God, regarding the whole transaction as an ecclesiastical act, intended to express a just abhorrence of the crime, a merited censure of it.

3. The reason assigned for the restoration of the offender was repentance,—*λῆπτι*,—*sorrow for his sin*, to which the apostle probably refers in a subsequent passage, 7: 10, when he says, "Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of."

⁷ Jahn's Archaeology, § 258. Du Pin, De Antiqua Disciplina, Diss. 3, c. 2, p. 272.

4. He was restored to the communion and fellowship of the church, as he had been excluded, *by the public consent*, the vote of that body. In accordance with these views, the apostle exhorts the Corinthians to separate from them any other immoral person, whether he be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner. 1 Cor. 5: 11. And the Galatians he exhorts to restore, in the spirit of meekness, one who may have been overtaken in fault. Now this right of judging and acting, both in the expulsion of the immoral and the restoration of the penitent, vests the power of ecclesiastical censure in them.⁸ Comp. 2 Thess. 3: 14, and Rom. 16: 17.

It was, therefore, the privilege of the apostolic church to administer its own discipline by a free and public decision in their own body, a right which accords with every just principle of religious liberty, while it clearly illustrates the popular character of the primitive constitution of the church. For, as in their elections, so in their discipline, the apostolical churches were doubtless in harmony one with another, and may justly be presumed to have observed the same rules of fellowship. Based on the same principles, and governed by similar laws, one example may suffice to illustrate the policy of all.⁹

2. Argument from the early fathers.

Few passages, comparatively, occur in their writings relating immediately to the point under consideration. But enough can be derived from them to show that the church continued, for two or three centuries, to regulate her own discipline by the will of the majority, expressed either by a popular vote, or by a representative delegation chosen by them.

⁸ Rights of the Church, by Tindal, p. 39.

⁹ On this whole subject, comp. Vitringa, De Synagoga, Lib. 3, p. 1, c. 10. Pertsch, Kirch. Hist., I, 4to, p. 469, seq. Recht. Eccles. Kirchenbanns, Vorrede, Ausgab, 1738, 4. C. M. Pfaff, De Originibus Juris Eccl., pp. 10-13. Neander's Allgem. Gesch., p. 349, seq., 71, 98, &c.

Clemens Romanus, the only apostolical father belonging strictly to the first century, and contemporary with several of the apostles, throughout his epistle treats the church of Corinth as the only court of censure. He addresses his epistle, A. D. 68 or 98, not to the bishop, but to the entire body of believers. This circumstance is worthy of particular notice, inasmuch as the epistle is written relative to a case of discipline, and not to enforce the practical duties of religion. The church at Corinth was recognized as having authority in the case under consideration. The epistle of Polycarp, also, treating on the same general subject, is addressed to the church at Philippi, recognizing in the same manner the right of the church to take cognizance of offences.

Clement, in his epistle, reflects severely upon the Corinthians for their treatment of their religious teachers, some of whom they had rejected from the ministry. To do this without good reason, he assures them "would be no small sin" in them,¹⁰ and earnestly exhorts them to exercise a charitable, orderly, and submissive spirit. But he offers no hint, § 42—53, that they had exceeded the limits of their legitimate authority, even in deposing some from the ministry; on the contrary, he recognizes the right of the church to regulate, at their discretion, their own discipline, and the duty of others to acquiesce in it. "Who among you is generous? who is compassionate? who has any charity? Let him say whether this sedition, this contention, and these schisms be on my account. I am ready to depart,—to go whithersoever you please, and *to do whatsoever ye shall command me*, only let the flock of Christ be in peace with the ministers that are set over them."¹¹

The above passage is twice quoted by Chancellor King, of the Episcopal church, in proof that the laity were members of the ecclesiastical court for the trial of offences, "and

¹⁰ Chauncey's *Episcopacy*, pp. 77, 78.

¹¹ Ep. ad Cor. c. 44.

judges therein."¹² And Riddle, of the same communion, concurs with him in opinion. "Clement," says this author, "recommends those on whose account the dissensions had arisen, to retire and to submit to the will of the majority."¹³ These censures to which Clement urges them to submit, he characterizes as "*the commands of the multitude*, τὰ προστάσσόμενα ὑπὸ τοῦ πλῆθους."

The epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians, written, according to bishop Wake, A. D. 116 or 117, affords us, indirectly, a similar example of the deportment of the church towards a fallen brother. This venerable father was greatly afflicted at the defection of Valens, a presbyter of that church, who had fallen into some scandalous offence. But he entreats the charitable consideration of the church towards the offender, urging them to exercise moderation towards him; and on similar occasions to seek to reclaim the erring, and to call them back, in the spirit of kindness and Christian charity.¹⁴ The address and exhortation, throughout, proceed on the supposition, that the duty of mutual watchfulness belongs to the brethren of the church collectively. It is not, however, a clear case of church discipline, though this may be implied.

Next in succession is Tertullian. He has given, in his Apology for the Christians, an account of the constitution of their society or church, together with the nature and circumstances of its religious worship and discipline. The passage in question is, in several respects, one of the most important extant, in the writings of the early fathers. Let us, however, confine our attention at present to that part of it which relates to their mode of administering ecclesiastical

¹² Primitive Church, B. I, c. 11, § 6, 7, § 2.

¹³ Christ. Antiq., p. 9. Εἰ δὲ ἐμὲ στάσις καὶ ἔρις καὶ σχίσματα ἐκχωρῶ, ἄπειμι, οὗ ἔαν βούλησθε, καὶ ποιῶ τὰ προστάσσόμενα ὑπὸ τοῦ πλῆθους.—*Ep. ad Cor.*, c. 54.

¹⁴ *Comp. Ep.*, c. 11.

censure. This Apology was written, probably, about A. D. 198 or 199, or, at the latest, in 205. "We, Christians," says Tertullian, "are one body by our agreement in religion, and our unity of discipline, and bonds of hope, *spei foedere*, being animated with one and the same hope." He then proceeds to describe their public worship as consisting in prayer and the reading of the Scriptures, and then adds, "Surely from the sacred oracles we strengthen our faith, we encourage our hope, we establish our trust [in God], and, by the divine precepts, press the duties of religion. Here, also, we exhort and reprove, and *pass the divine censure*,—[the sentence of excommunication]. For, the judgment is given with great solemnity, and as in the presence of God. And it is regarded as the most impressive emblem of the final judgment, when one has so sinned as to be banished from the prayers, the assemblies, and the holy communion of the church."¹⁵

We are a society, *corpus sumus*; we are an associated body, in which seems, of necessity, to be implied the idea of a voluntary, deliberative and popular assembly;—and the tenor of the entire passage, viewed in its connection, forcibly impresses us with the conviction, that the "divine censure" was inflicted by the united decision of that body. Certain approved elders, *probatī quique seniores*, presided; but nothing is said to indicate even that they *pronounced* the sentence, as the officers of the church. How extraordinary the omission, then, if these elders had already, within the space of one hundred and fifty years, usurped

¹⁵ *Corpus sumus de conscientia religionis et disciplinae unitate et spei foedere. Certe fidem, sanctis vocibus pascimus, spem erigimus, fiduciam figimus, disciplinam praeceptorum nihilominus inculcationibus, densamus; ibidem etiam exhortationes, castigationes, et censura divina. Nam et judicatur magno cum pondere, ut apud certos de Dei conspectu; summumque futuri iudicii praejudicium est, se quis ita deliquerit ut, a communicatione orationis et conventus et omnis sancti commercii relegatur.—Apol. 39. Comp. § 62, also J. H. Böhrer, Diss. 3, p. 151.*

the prerogatives, and assumed the rights, which, by divine authority, was originally accorded to the church,—of regulating her own discipline by her public deliberative assembly? Chancellor King,¹⁶ and even the “great Du Pin,”¹⁷ though himself a Roman Catholic, both cite the above passage, as evidence that the discipline of the church continued to be administered, as from the beginning it had been, *by public vote of the church*; the clergy being understood to have had a joint action and influence in these deliberations.

On another occasion, Tertullian remarks, that the crimes of idolatry and of murder are of such enormity, that the charity of the *churches* is not extended to such as had been guilty of these offences.¹⁸

We come next to Cyprian, who was contemporary with Tertullian, and died about forty years later. In considering the authority of Cyprian, let the reader also bear in mind the following remarks of Riddle relative to this celebrated father. “In these writings of Cyprian, as well as in all his works, we are especially delighted with the sincere and primitive piety of the author; while the chief subject of our regret and disapprobation are his mistaken views concerning the constitution of the church, and, especially, his assertion of undue power and prerogative on behalf of Christian ministers;—of such influence and authority as the apostles never sanctioned, and such as no pastors who have thoroughly imbibed the apostolic spirit would wish to exercise or to possess.”¹⁹ But notwithstanding this “undue power and prerogative” which Cyprian ascribes to Christian ministers, he uniformly recognizes, and most fully asserts, the right of the church to direct the discipline of its members. About the year 250, the emperor Decius

¹⁶ Prim. Christ., P. I, c. VII, § 4.

¹⁷ Du Pin's Antiqua Disciplina, Diss. 3, c. 1.

¹⁸ Neque idololatriæ, neque sanguini pax ab ecclesiis redditur.—*De Pudicit*, c. 12.

¹⁹ Christ. Antiq., p. 99.

issued an edict commanding the Christians to sacrifice to the gods. To escape the requisitions and penalties of this edict, Cyprian, then bishop of Carthage, was compelled to fly for his life, and continued in exile about sixteen months. But many of his church, under the relentless persecution that ensued, yielded an apparent compliance to the emperor's impious command. Others, without compliance, had the address to obtain a certain certificate from the prosecuting officer which freed them from further molestation. All such persons, however, were denominated the lapsed, *lapsi*, and were excommunicated as apostates. The system of canonical penance, as it was called, at this time was so far established, that this class of offenders were required to fulfil the forms of a prescribed and prolonged penance before they could be restored to the communion of the church. Many of the lapsed, however, touched with a sense of their guilt, plead for an abatement of the rigor of these austerities, and an earlier and easier return to the communion of the church. To this course a party in the church were, for various reasons, strongly inclined; and some were actually restored in the absence of the bishop. This irregularity was often and severely censured by Cyprian, who, in his epistles and writings relative to the case of the lapsed, often recognizes the right of the people to be a party in the deliberations and decisions held, and to be held, respecting them. The clergy who had favored this abuse, he says, "shall give an account of what they have done, to himself, to the confessors,²⁰ and to the whole church."²¹

²⁰ "It was the privilege of the *confessors*, that is, of persons who had suffered torture, or received sentence of death, to give to any of the lapsed a written paper, termed a *letter of peace*; and the bearer was entitled to a remission of some part of the ecclesiastical discipline."—*Burton's History of the Church*, Chap. 15.

²¹ Acturi et apud nos, et apud confessores ipsos, et apud plebem universam, causam suam cum Domino permittente, in sinum matris ecclesie recolligi coeperimus.—*Ep.* 10, al. 9.

Again he says, in a letter addressed to the church, "When the Lord shall have restored peace unto us all, and we shall all have returned to the church again, we shall then examine all these things, *you also being present and judging of them.*" In the conclusion of the same epistle he adds, "I desire then that they would patiently hear our counsel and wait for our return, that then, when many of us, bishops, shall have met together, we may examine the certificates and desires of the blessed martyrs, according to the discipline of the Lord, in the presence of the confessors, and *according to your will.*"²²

Again, in his epistle to his people at Carthage, in which he bewails the schism of Felicissimus, he assures them that, on his return, he with his colleagues, will dispose of the case *agreeably to the will of his people*, and the mutual council of both clergy and people.²³ The two offending subdeacons and acolyths, he declares, shall be tried, not only in the presence of his colleagues, but *before the whole people.*²⁴ The above and other similar passages are often cited in evidence of the agency which the people still continued, in the middle of the third century, to exert in the administration of ecclesiastical censure.²⁵ Will one presume to say, that in refusing to decide upon any case, or to exercise any authority, he only condescends kindly

²² Cum, pace nobis omnibus a Domino prius data, ad ecclesiam regredi coeperimus, tunc examinabuntur singula, *præsentibus et judicantibus vobis.*—Audiant quaeso, patientur consilium nostrum, expectent regressionem nostram; ut cum ad vos, per Dei misericordiam venerimus, convocati episcopi plures secundum Domini disciplinam, et confessorum, *præsentiam et vestram quoque sententiam martyrum litteras et desideria examinare possimus.*—*Ep. 12, al. 11.*

²³ Cum collegiis meis, quibus *præsentibus*, secundum arbitrium quoque vestrum et omnium nostrum commune consilium, sicut semel placuit ea quæ agenda sunt, disponere pariter et limare poterimus.—*Ep. 40.*

²⁴ Non tantum cum collegis meis, sed cum plebe ipsa universa.—*Ep. 34.* Crimina—publice a nobis et *plebe* cognoscerentur.—*Ep. 44.*

²⁵ Comp. Dailly, Right Use of the Fathers, B. 2, c. 6, pp. 328—330.

to regard the will of the people, without acknowledging their right? we ask in reply, Is this the language and spirit of prelacy? Could a modern diocesan so speak, and perform all his duties with such scrupulous regard to the will of his people in every thing, without exciting in their minds the idea of that religious liberty, which, from the beginning, the church was accustomed to enjoy, and which they were so much encouraged to exercise? Under such instructions, they must have been but poor proficients in the doctrine of passive obedience.

Enough has been said to illustrate, at least, the usage of the church at Carthage. Between this church and that at Rome, under Cornelius, there was, at this time, the greatest harmony of sentiment in relation to the discipline of the church. And, from the correspondence between the churches, which is recorded in the works of Cyprian, there is conclusive evidence that the polity of that church was the same as that of Carthage. This is so clearly asserted by Du Pin, that I shall dismiss this point by citing his authority. After making the extract from Tertullian, which has been given above, and others from Cyprian, similar to those which have already been cited, he adds, "From whence it is plain, that both in Rome and at Carthage, no one could be expelled from the church, or restored again, except with the consent of the people." This, according to the same author, was in conformity with apostolical precedent in the case of the incestuous person at Corinth.²⁶

Origen, again, of Caesarea in Palestine, speaks of the conviction of an offender before the whole church, *ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ*, as the customary mode of trial.²⁷ With that

²⁶ De Antiqua Disciplina, Diss. 3, pp. 248, 249.

²⁷ Πρὸς δὲ τὸ δοκοῦν σκληρὸν πρὸς τοὺς τὰ ἐλαττονα ἡμαρτηκότας, ἔπειτα τις ἂν διὰ οὐκ ἔξεστι δις ἐξῆς μὴ ἀκούσαντα, τὸ τρίτον ἀκουσαι ὡς διὰ τοῦτο μηκέτι εἶναι ὡς ἔθικόν καὶ τελώνην, ἢ μηκέτι δεσθῆναι τοῦ ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ. — *Comment. in Matt.*, Tom. 13, p. 612. Com. p. 613.

of Origen we may join the authority of Chrysostom at Constantinople. In commenting upon 1 Cor. 5: 3—5, he represents the complaint of the apostle to be that the Corinthians had not put away that wicked person from among them; "showing that this ought to be done without their teacher,"²⁸ and that the apostle associates them with him, "that his own authority might not seem to be too great" in the transaction. Theodoret also expresses much the same sentiments upon the passage under consideration.²⁹

These authorities are derived both from the Eastern and the Western church. As ancient expositions of the apostolical rule, and as examples of the usage of the churches in the ages immediately succeeding that of the apostles, they indicate that throughout this period ecclesiastical discipline was administered in accordance with the will of the people, and by their decision. The bishops and clergy, instead of holding in their own grasp the keys of the kingdom of heaven, co-operated with the church in their deliberations; and acted as the official organ of the assembly in executing its decisions. Neither were the bans of the church wielded in terror, as often they have been since, by an arbitrary priesthood, to accomplish their own sinister ends.

The penitent was restored, also, in the spirit of kindness and Christian forgiveness, by the joint consent of the same body which had originally excluded him from their communion.

This point deserves distinct consideration, as another indication of the religious liberty enjoyed by the church. Paul submitted to the church at Corinth the restoration of the offender whom they had excluded from his communion.

²⁸ Δεικνὺς δτι δὲ χωρὶς τοῦ διδασκάλου το γενέσθαι ἔδει
ἵνα μὴ δόξη πολλή εἶτ ἡ αὐθεντία.

Hom. 15, ad 1 Cor., Tom. 10, p. 126.

²⁹ Theodoret, Comment. ad locum, Opera, Tom. 3, p. 141. Comp. Blondell, *De jure plebis in regimine ecclesiastico*, where many other authorities are given.

Tertullian makes it the duty of the penitent to cast himself at the feet of the clergy, and kneeling at the altar of God, to *seek the pardon and intercessions of all the brethren*.³⁰ Cyprian, in the passage cited above, declares, that the lapsed, who had been excluded from the church, must make their defence before all the people, *apud plebem universam*. "It was ordained by an African synod, in the third century, that, except in danger of death, or of a sudden persecution, none should be received unto the peace of the church, *without the knowledge and consent of the people*."³¹ Natalis, at Rome, in the first part of the third century, threw himself at the feet of the clergy and *laity*, and so bewailed his faults, that *the church was moved with compassion for him*, and with much difficulty he was received into their communion.³² The same is related of one of the bishops, who was restored to the church at Rome, under Cornelius, to lay communion, "*through the mediation of all the people then present*."³³ Serapion, at Antioch, again, was refused admission to that church, nobody *giving attention to him*.³⁴ At Rome, then, in Africa, in Asia, and universally, the penitent was restored to Christian communion, by the authority of the church from which he had been expelled.

If it were necessary to adduce further evidence in vindication of the right of the people to administer the discipline of the church, it might be drawn from the acknowledged fact, that the people, down to the third or fourth century, retained, and not unfrequently exercised, the right even of deposing one from the ministry. The controversy of the people of Corinth with their pastors, as indicated in the epistle of

³⁰ Presbyteris advolvi, et caris Dei adgeniculari omnibus fratribus legationes deprecationis suae injungere.—*De Poenitentia*, c. 9.

³¹ Cyprian, Epist. 59. The same fact is also asserted by Du Pin, in the passage quoted above.

³² Euseb., Eccl. Hist., Lib. 5, c. 28.

³³ Euseb., Eccl. Hist., Lib. 6, c. 43. ³⁴ Euseb., Eccl. Hist., Lib. 6, c. 44.

Clement, has been already mentioned; and the case of Valens deposed from the ministry by the church at Philippi. To these may be added the instances of Martialis and Basilides, bishops of Leon and Astorga in Spain, who were deposed by their people for idolatry. From this sentence of the people they appealed to several bishops in Africa. These, after hearing the case in common council, A. D. 258, affirmed the act of the people. The result of their deliberations was communicated by Cyprian, from which decision the extract below is taken, in which he fully accords to the people the right both to choose the worthy and to depose the unworthy. *Eligendi dignos sacerdotes et indignos recusandi*. "Many other such like passages," says King, "are found in that synodical epistle, which flatly asserts the people's power to depose a wicked and scandalous bishop,"³⁵ and with him Bingham substantially agrees.³⁶ And again, by Dr. Barrow, of the Episcopal church. "In reason, the nature of any spiritual office consisting in instruction in truth, and guidance in virtue toward the attainment of salvation, if any man doth lead into pernicious error or impiety, he thereby ceaseth to be capable of such office; as a blind man, by being so, doth cease to be a guide. No man can be bound to follow any one into the ditch, or to obey any one in prejudice to his own salvation. If any pastor should teach bad doctrine, or prescribe bad practice, his people may reject and disobey him."³⁷

³⁵ Prim. Chris., P. 1, c. 6. The following passage is an example of such an assertion. Inde per temporum et successionum vices episcoporum ordinatio et ecclesiae ratio decurrit ut *ecclesia super episcopos constituatur* et omnis actus ecclesiae per eosdem praepositos gubernetur. Cum hoc itaque *lege divina* fundatum sit, miror quosdam, audaci temeritate, sic mihi scribere voluisse ut ecclesiae nomine literas facerent, quando ecclesia in episcopo et clero et in omnibus stantibus [*i. e., who had apostatized*] sit constituta.—*Ep.* 33, al. 27.

³⁶ Book 16, c 1. Comp. Neander's Allgem. Kirch. Gesch., 11, p. 341.

³⁷ Barrow's Works, Vol. I, p. 744. Comp., also, Pertsch, Kirch. Hist., I, p. 370. Mosheim, Can. Recht, p. 60.

From these censures of a popular assembly an appeal would be made, as in the case before us, to a synodical council, or to the neighboring bishops. For this reason, they are sometimes represented as the ecclesiastical court for the trial of the clergy. Such they were at a subsequent period; but in the primitive church it was, as appears from the foregoing authorities, the right of the church to exercise her discipline over both laity and clergy. The greater includes the less. The right to depose a scandalous bishop, of necessity supposes the right to expel from their communion an unworthy member of humbler rank. As, in the highest act of ecclesiastical censure, so in smaller offences, the conclusion is irresistible, that the discipline of the church was conducted with the strictest regard to the popular rights and privileges of its members.

3. Argument from the authority of ecclesiastical writers. Authority is not argument. But the opinion of those who have made ecclesiastical history the study of their life, is worthy of our confidence. The concurring opinion of many such becomes a valid reason for our belief. What then is their authority?

Valesius, the learned commentator on Eusebius, says that "the people's suffrages were required when any one was to be received into the church, who for any fault had been excommunicated."³⁸ This is said in relation to the usage of the church in the third century.

The authority of Du Pin, the distinguished historian of the Roman Catholic communion, whose opinion is worthy of all confidence, is to the same effect; that the discipline of the church continued, in the third century, to be administered by the church as it had been from the beginning.³⁹

Simons, profoundly learned on all points relating to ecclesiastical usage, says that, "this church discipline was

³⁸ Eccl. Hist., Lib. 6, 44. Com. Lib. 5, 28.

³⁹ Antiqua Disciplina, Diss. 3, c. 1.

so administered that not only the clergy, especially the bishops, and in important cases a council of them, but also the church, in every case, gave their decision and approbation, in order that nothing might be done through prejudice and private interest by being submitted to the clergy and bishops alone."⁴⁰

Baumgarten ascribes to the church alone the entire control of ecclesiastical censures, from the earliest periods of the church down to the time of Cyprian, when he supposes each case to have been first adjudicated by the church, and afterwards by the clergy and bishops.⁴¹

Mosheim is full and explicit to the same point. He not only ascribes to the church the power of enacting their own laws and choosing their own officers, but of excluding and receiving such as were the subjects of discipline, *malos et degeneros et excludendi et recipiendi*, and adds that nothing of any moment was transacted or decided without their knowledge and consent.⁴²

Planck asserts that, so late as the middle of the third century, the church still exercised their original right of controlling the bans of the church, both in the exclusion of offenders, and in the restitution of penitents.⁴³

Guerike also states, that, in the third century, the duty of excluding from the church and of restoring to their communion, devolved still upon the laity.⁴⁴

The views of Neander again are sufficiently apparent from quotations which have already been made in the progress of this work. More thoroughly conversant with the writings of the fathers, and more profoundly skilled in the government and history of the church than any man

⁴⁰ Vorlesungen, über Christ. Alterthum., p. 426.

⁴¹ Erläuterungen, Christ. Alterthum., § 122. Comp. also § 36, and p. 85.

⁴² De Rebus Christ., Saec. Prim., § 45.

⁴³ Gesell. Verfass., 1, pp. 180, 508. Comp. pp. 129—140, and Fuch's Bibliotheca, 1, p. 43, seq.

⁴⁴ Kirch. Gesch., p. 94, 100, 101, 2d edit.

living, he not only ascribes the discipline of offenders originally to the deliberation and action of the church, but states, moreover, that this right was retained by the laity in the middle of the third century, after the rise of the Episcopal power, and the consequent change in the government of the church. "The participation of the laity in the concerns of the church was not yet altogether excluded. One of these concerns was the restoration of the lapsed to the communion of the church. The examination which was instituted in connection with this restoration was also held before the whole church."⁴⁵

These authorities might be extended almost indefinitely; but enough have been cited to show that, in the opinion of those who are most competent to decide, the sacred right of directing the discipline of the church was, from the beginning, exercised by the whole body of believers belonging to the community; and that they continued, in the third century, in the exercise of the same prerogative.

4. Argument from the fact, that the entire government of the church was under the control of its members.

The popular government of the primitive church pervaded their ecclesiastical polity throughout. The members of the church unitedly enacted their laws, elected their officers, established their judicature, and managed all their affairs by their mutual suffrages. "With them resided the power of enacting laws, as also of adopting or rejecting whatever might be proposed in the general assemblies, and of expelling and again receiving into communion any depraved or unworthy members. In a word, nothing whatever, of any moment, could be determined on, or carried into effect, without their knowledge and concurrence."⁴⁶

On this point we must be permitted again to adduce the authority of Neander. After showing at length, that,

⁴⁵ Allgem. Kirch. Gesch., i, p. 342, 2d edit.

⁴⁶ Mosheim, De Rebus Christ., Sæc. 1, § 45.

agreeably to the spirit of the primitive church, all were regarded as different organs and members of one body, and actuated by one and the same spirit, he adds, "But from the nature of the religious life and of the Christian church, it is hardly possible to draw the inference naturally that the government should have been entrusted to the hands of a single one. *The monarchical form of government accords not with the spirit of the Christian church.*"⁴⁷

Riddle gives the following sketch of the constitution and government of the church at the beginning of the second century. "The subordinate government, &c., of each particular church was vested in itself; that is to say, the whole body elected its minister and officers, and was consulted concerning all matters of importance." This is said of the church at the close of the first century.⁴⁸

Even the "judicious" Hooker, the great expounder of the ecclesiastical polity of the Episcopal church, distinctly declares, that "the general consent of all" is requisite for the ratification of the laws of the church. "Laws could they never be without the consent of the whole church to be guided by them; whereunto both nature, and the practice of the church of God set down in Scripture, is found so consonant, that God himself would not impose his own laws upon his people by the hands of Moses without their free and open consent."⁴⁹

From all which, in connection with what has already been said in the fore part of this work, the popular administration of the government is sufficiently manifest. Even the minute concerns of the church were submitted to the direction of the popular voice. Is a delegate to be sent out, he goes, not as the servant of the bishop, but as the representative of the church, chosen to this service by public vote.⁵⁰ Is a letter missive to be issued from one church to another,

⁴⁷ Allgem. Gesch., 1, p. 312, 2d. edit.

⁴⁸ Chronology, p. 13.

⁴⁹ Ecclesiastical Polity, B. VIII.

⁵⁰ Ignatius, ad. Phil., c. 10.

it is done in the name of the church; and, when received, is publicly read.⁵¹ In short, nothing is done without the consent of the church. Even Cyprian, the great advocate for Episcopal precedence in the middle of the third century, protests to his clergy, that, "from his first coming to his bishopric, he had ever resolved to do nothing according to his own private will, without the advice of the clergy and the approbation of the people."⁵²

The point now under consideration is very clearly presented by an old English writer, of Cambridge in England, whose work on Primitive Episcopacy evinces a familiar acquaintance with the early history of the church that entitles his conclusions to great respect. "In the apostle's times, and divers ages after, all the people, under the inspection of one bishop, were wont to meet together, not only for worship, but for other administrations. All public acts passed at assemblies of the whole people. They were consulted with, their concurrence was thought necessary, and their presence required, that nothing might pass without their cognizance, satisfaction and consent. This was observed, not only in elections of officers, but in ordinations and censures, in admission of members and reconciling penitents, and in debates and consultations about other emergences. There is such evidence of this, particularly in Cyprian, almost in every one of his epistles,

⁵¹ The letters of Clement and Polycarp were written by the authority of the churches respectively. Comp. Euseb., Eccl. Hist., 4, c. 15. 5, c. 1, and c. 24. With the epistle of Clement, five delegates were sent also from the church at Rome, to that of Corinth, to attempt to reconcile the dissensions in that church. § 59.

⁵² Ad id vero quod scripserunt mihi compresbyteri nostri, Donatus et Fortunatus, Novatus et Gordius, solus rescribere nihil potui; quando a primordio episcopatus mei statuerim nihil sine consilio vestro, et sine consensu plebis meae privatim sententia gerere; sed cum ad vos per Dei gratiam venero, tunc de eis quae vel gesta sunt, vel gerenda sicut honor mutuus poseit in commune tractabimus.—*Cyprian, Ep. 5.* Comp. Ep. 3, 55. *Daille on the Fathers*, p. 330. London.

that it is acknowledged by modern writers of all sorts, such as are most learned and best acquainted with antiquity." ⁵³

If then the sanction of the church was sought in the minutest matters, much more must not an act of such solemnity, as that of expelling the guilty, and of restoring the penitent, have been submitted to their direction? Is a Christian salutation to a sister church communicated by public authority, commending, it may be, a faithful brother to their communion, and have they no voice in rejecting a fallen and reprobate member from their communion? Is the sanction of that body requisite before one from another church can be received to their communion, and have they no voice in restoring the penitent who returns confessing his sins and entreating the enjoyment of the same privileges?

All this fully accords with the usage of the apostolical churches, and is evidently a continuation of the same policy. Whether deacons are to be appointed, or an apostle or presbyters chosen, it is done by vote of the church. A case for discipline occurs; it is submitted to the church. A dissension arises, Acts 15; this also is referred to the church. The decision is made up as seemeth good *to the whole church*. The result is communicated by the apostles, the elders, and the brethren jointly. The brethren of the church have a part in all ecclesiastical concerns; nothing is transacted without their approbation and consent. The sovereign power is vested in the people. They are constituted by the apostles themselves the guardians of the church, holding in their hands the keys of the kingdom, to open and to shut, to bind and to loose at their discretion. So the apostles and primitive fathers evidently understood

⁵³ Clarkson's *Primitive Episcopacy*, pp. 171, 172. The authority of the *Magdeburg Centuriators* is also to the same effect. *Comp. Chap. 7, Cent. II, and III.*

and administered the government of the church. Neither Peter, nor any apostle, nor bishop, nor presbyter, but each and every disciple of Christ, is the rock on which he would build his church. Such is Origen's interpretation of the passage in Matt. 16: 18. "Every disciple of Christ is that rock, and upon all such the whole doctrine of the church, and of its corresponding polity is built. If you suppose it to be built upon Peter alone, what say you of John, that son of thunder; and of each of the apostles? Will you presume to say, that the gates of hell will prevail against the other apostles, and against all the saints, but not against Peter? Rather is not this, and that other declaration, 'On this rock I will build my church,' applicable to each and every one alike?"⁵⁴

Such are the arguments which we offer in defence of the proposition, that any body of believers, associated together in the enjoyment of religious rights and privileges, was originally an ecclesiastical court, for the trial of offences.⁵⁵ This is asserted by the great Du Pin, of the Roman Catholic church. It is admitted by respectable authorities, King, Cave, Riddle, &c., of the Episcopal church. It is generally acknowledged by Protestants of other religious denominations. It is implied or asserted in various passages from the early fathers. They speak of it, not as a controverted point, but as an admitted principle. The sanction of the primitive church was sought in all the less important concerns of the church. They controlled also, and frequently exercised, the highest acts of ecclesiastical censure, in deposing their own pastors and bishops who proved themselves unworthy of their sacred office. And, finally, the church was from the beginning authorized and

⁵⁴ Comment. in Matt., Tom. 3, p. 524.

⁵⁵ It was a doctrine of Tertullian, that where three are assembled together in the name of Christ, there they constitute a church, though only belonging to the laity. Three were sufficient for this purpose. *Ubi tres, ecclesia est, licet laici.*—*Exhort. ad Castitat.*, c. 7, 522. *De Fuga*, c. 14.

instructed by the apostle Paul, to administer discipline to an offending member. With the approbation of the great apostle, they pronounced upon the transgressor the sentence of excommunication, and again, on receiving satisfactory evidence of penitence, restored him to their communion and fellowship.

With the question of expediency, in all this, we have no concern. If any prefer the Episcopal, to a free and popular system of government, they have an undoubted right to resign the exercise of this, and of all their rights, to the control of the diocesan. But when they go on to assert that the exercise of such authority belongs to him by the divine right of Episcopacy, we rest assured that they have begun to teach for doctrine the commandments of men. From the beginning it was not so. "Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition."

MODE OF ADMISSION.

This was at first extremely simple; consisting only in the profession of faith in Christ, and baptism. The church, however, at an early period, learned the necessity of exercising greater caution in receiving men into her communion. Taught by their own bitter experience, they began to require, in the candidate for admission to their communion, a competent acquaintance with religious truth, and a trial of his character for a considerable space of time. From undue laxness, they passed into the opposite extreme, of excessive rigor in prescribing rules and qualifications for communion. These austerities gave rise to the order of catechumens towards the close of the second century, and to a long train of formalities preliminary to an union with the church.

In immediate connection with these rites, and as a part of the same discipline, began the system of penance in the treatment of the *lapsed*—persons who had incurred the

censure of the church. By this system a return to the church was rendered even more difficult than their original entrance to it. This penitentiary system was rapidly developed. In the course of the third century it was brought into full operation, while the people still retained much influence over the penal inflictions of the church upon transgressors.⁵⁶ But it is not our purpose to treat upon this subject. The system is detailed at length in the author's *Antiquities of the Christian Church*, Chap. XVII, to which the reader is referred for information in relation to the offences which were the subject of discipline, the penalties inflicted, and the manner of restoring penitents.

The entire regimen however passed, in process of time, from the people into the hands of the clergy, especially of the bishops. It was lost in the general extinction of the rights and privileges of the church, and the overthrow of its primitive apostolical constitution; upon the ruins of which was reared the Episcopal hierarchy, first in the form of an "ambitious oligarchy," as Riddle very justly denominates it, and then, of a tyrannical despotism.

II. Usurpation of discipline by the priesthood.

In the fourth century, the clergy, by a discipline peculiar to themselves, and applicable only to persons belonging to their order, found means of relieving themselves from the penalties of the protracted penance which was exacted of those who fell under the censure of the church. Suspension and the lesser excommunication or degradation, and the like, were substituted as the penalties of the clergy, instead of the rigorous penance of the laity. And though in some respects it was claimed, that the discipline of the clergy was more severe than that of the laity, the practical effect of this discrimination, which was gradually introduced, was to

⁵⁶ Planck, *Gesellschafts-Verfass.*, 1, pp. 129—140. Fuch's *Bibliotheca*, 1, pp. 43, 44, 45—50, 403.

separate the clergy from the laity, and to bring the latter more under the power of the priesthood.⁵⁷ It was at once the occasion of intolerance in the one hand, and of oppression to the other.

The confederation of the churches in synods and councils had also much influence in producing the same result. In these conventions, laws and regulations were enacted for the government and discipline of the churches of the province. And though the churches, severally, still retained the right of regulating their own polity, as circumstances might require, they seldom claimed the exercise of their prerogatives. The result was, that the law-making power was transferred, in a great degree, from the people to the provincial synods, where again the authority of the people was lost in the overpowering influence of bishops and clergy. These affected at first only to act as the representatives of their respective churches, by authority delegated to them by their constituents.⁵⁸ But they soon assumed a loftier tone. Claiming for themselves the guidance of the Spirit of God, they professed to speak and act according to the teachings of this divine agent. Their decis-

⁵⁷ Planck, *Gesellschafts-Verfass.*, 1, pp. 342—346. Comp. c. 2, pp. 125—141.

⁵⁸ Tertullian describes such assemblies as bodies representative of the whole Christian church. *Ipsa repræsentatio totius nominis Christiani.*—*De Jejun.*, c. 13, p. 552.

In the infancy, indeed, of councils, the bishops did not scruple to acknowledge that they appeared there merely as the ministers or legates of their respective churches, and that they were, in fact, nothing more than representatives acting from instructions; but it was not long before this humble language began, by little and little, to be exchanged for a loftier tone. They at length took upon themselves to assert that they were the legitimate successors of the apostles themselves, and might, consequently, of their own proper authority, dictate laws to the Christian flock. To what extent the inconveniences and evils arising out of these preposterous pretensions reached in after times, is too well known to require any particular notice in this place.—*Mosheim, De Rebus Christ., Saec. II, § 23.*

ions, therefore, instead of being the judgment of ignorant and erring men, were the dictates of unerring wisdom. And the people, in exchange for the government which they had been accustomed to prescribe for themselves, were kindly provided with an administration which claimed to be directed by wisdom from above.⁵⁹ Taught thus and disciplined in that great lesson of bigotry and spiritual despotism,—*passive submission to persons ordained of God for the good of the church*,—they were prepared to resign their original rights and privileges into the hands of the hierarchy.

There is the fullest evidence that the action of the laity was requisite, as late as the middle of the third century, in all disciplinary proceedings of the church. By the beginning of the fourth, however, this cardinal right, through the operation of causes, which have been briefly mentioned and which may be more fully specified hereafter, was greatly abridged, and shortly became wholly lost. This fact strongly illustrates the progress of the Episcopal hierarchy. While the right of the laity is yet undisputed, the power of the bishop begins at first to be partially asserted, and occasionally admitted; the people occupying a neutral position between submission and open hostility. But, from disuse to denial, and from denial to the extinction of neglected privileges and powers, the descent is natural, short and rapid. From about the middle of the fourth century, accordingly, the bishops assumed the control of the whole penal jurisdiction of the laity, opening and shutting at pleasure the doors of the church, inflicting sentence of excommunication, and prescribing, at their discretion, the austerities of penance; and again absolving the penitents, and restoring them to the church by their own arbitrary power.⁶⁰ The people, accordingly, no longer

⁵⁹ Planck, *Gesellschafts-Verfass.*, 1, pp. 448—452.

⁶⁰ Planck, *Gesellschafts-Verfass.*, 1, 509.

having any part in the trial of offences, ceased to watch for the purity of the church, connived at offences, and concealed the offender; not caring to interfere with the prerogatives of the bishop, in which they had no further interest. The speedy and sad corruption of the church was but the natural consequence of this loose and arbitrary discipline. Nor can it be doubted, that this was one efficient cause of that degeneracy which succeeded.

The ecclesiastical discipline, if such indeed it can be called, now appears in total contrast with that of the church under the apostles. Then, the supreme authority was vested in the people; now, it is with the clergy. The church then enacted her own laws, and administered her discipline; the pastor, as the executive officer, acting in accordance with her will for the promotion of her purity and of her prosperity. The clergy are now the supreme arbiters of the church, from whom all laws emanate; and the executors of their own arbitrary enactments. The church is no longer a free and independent republic, extending to its constituents the rights and privileges of religious liberty; but a spiritual monarchy under the power of an ambitious hierarchy whose will is law, which the people are taught to receive, as if meting out to them, with wisdom from on high, the mercy and the justice, the goodness and severity of their righteous Lawgiver and Judge. They are wholly disfranchised by the priesthood, who have assumed the prerogatives of the prophetic Antichrist, who "as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God."

REMARKS.

1. It is the right and the duty of the members of every church, themselves to administer the discipline of their own body.

Each church is a voluntary association, formed for the mutual enjoyment of the privileges and ordinances of religion. To them belongs the right to prescribe the conditions of a connection with their communion, or of exclusion from it, as may seem good to them, in conformity with the principles of the gospel. The right vests in them collectively. As an independent association, they are competent, if they please, to surrender the administration of this right to another — to a consistory, to a presbytery, or to a presbyter or bishop. But no man, or body of men, can lawfully usurp authority over them, or embarrass the free exercise of this religious right. Any interference with these privileges is an unjust infringement of their religious liberty.

The duty of carefully exercising a Christian watch and fellowship, one toward another, and of excluding those who walk unworthily, is most clearly enforced in the Scriptures; and however it may be disregarded in particular instances, it is generally acknowledged to be one important means of preserving the purity of the church, and of promoting the honor of religion.

2. Ecclesiastical censure is not a penal infliction, but a *moral discipline* for the reformation of the offender and the honor of religion.

This thought has been already presented, but it should be borne distinctly in mind. Church discipline seeks, in the kindness of Christian love, to recover a fallen brother, to aid him in his spiritual conflicts, and to save him from hopeless ruin. In its simplicity and moral efficacy, if not

in principle, the discipline of the apostolical and primitive churches differed totally from that complicated system of penance into which it degenerated under the hierarchy. The austerities of this system, with its pains and privations, have more the appearance of penal inflictions to deter others from sin, than of Christian efforts to reclaim the guilty. The penance of the ancient church was often, in the hands of the priesthood, an engine of torture with which to molest an adversary, or to gratify private resentment. But the Christian love that administers ecclesiastical censure, in the spirit of the apostolical rule, superior to all sinister motives, seeks only the reformation of the offender, and the honor of that sacred cause which he has dishonored.⁶¹

3. This mode of discipline is the best safeguard against the introduction of bad men into the church.

The members of the church who are associated with the candidate in the relations and pursuits of private life, best know his character. They form the most unbiased judgment of his qualifications; and have less to overrule their decisions than any other men. Commit, therefore, the high trust of receiving men into the sacred relations of the church of Christ, neither to bishop nor presbyter, or pastor, but to the united, unbiased decision of the members of that communion.

4. Discipline administered by the brethren of the church is the best means of securing the kind and candid trial of those who may be the subjects of ecclesiastical censure.

Cases of this kind are often involved in great difficulty, and always require to be treated with peculiar delicacy and impartiality. These ends of impartial justice the wisdom of the world seeks to secure by the *verdict of a jury*. The brethren of the church, in like manner, are the safest tribunal for the impeachment of those who walk unworthily.

⁶¹ Venema, *Institutiones Hist. Eccles.*, III, § 188, p. 214, seq.

Commit to any other hands this high trust, and it is in danger either of being totally neglected, or else perverted by some private bias, or partizan spirit.

5. The mode of discipline now under consideration relieves the pastor from unwelcome responsibilities, both in the admission of members and in the treatment of offences.

He has a delicate and responsible duty to perform towards those who present themselves for admission to the church. He is not satisfied, it may be, with regard to the qualifications of the candidate, and yet this is only an impression received from a great variety of considerations which cannot well be expressed. But to refuse the applicant, without assigning good and sufficient reasons, may expose him to the charge of uncharitableness, and involve him in great difficulty. Under this circumstance, no railing accusation can be brought against him, provided the case is submitted to the impartial decision of the church.

And again, in the treatment of offences, the pastor should always be able to take shelter under the authority of the church. Like Paul, in the case of the Corinthians, he may be obliged to rebuke them for their neglect, and to urge them to their duty. But he should never appear as the accuser and prosecutor of any of his people. The trial should begin and end with the church, who ought always to be ready to deliver their pastor from duties so difficult and delicate, which belong not to his sacred office.

6. Discipline so administered serves to promote the peace of the church.

An unruly member of the church often has the address to raise a violent party. In every communion may be found a certain number of hasty, restless spirits, who are ever ready to rally at the cry of bigotry, intolerance, persecution, however unjustly raised. The contention may rise high and rend the whole church asunder, if the minister alone becomes, in their fiery zeal, the object of attack. The only

safe appeal now is to the calm, deliberate decision of the whole body of the church. Here the case is open for a full discussion and a fair decision; which, more than any thing else, has power to silence the rage of faction, and to calm the tumults of party. It is in vain to contend against the sovereign power of the majority. The charge of acting from personal prejudice and private animosity lies not against them, as against a single individual. Thus a church may gather about their pastor for the defence of his character, for his encouragement in the faithful discharge of his duty, and for the preservation of their own peace, by silencing the clamors of any restless malcontents.

7. The only mode that has ever been devised for preserving the discipline of the church is to submit it to the control, not of the clergy, but of the members themselves.

The consequence of depriving the members of the church of a participation in its discipline, soon after the rise of Episcopacy, was this;—they became remiss in their attention to the scandals of their brethren, and withdrew their watch over each other.⁶² And since that day, when was it ever known that any just discipline was maintained in any church under a national establishment and an independent priesthood? What is the discipline of the Episcopal church even in this country, where, without a state religion, or an independent priesthood, the laity have little or no concern with the admission of members to their communion, or the exclusion of them from it? Let the reader weigh well this consideration. It suggests one of our strong and most important objections to the ecclesiastical polity of the Episcopal church.⁶³ Why do the malcontents of other

⁶² Planck, *Gesell. Verfass.*, 1, p. 509, seq.

⁶³ Some of the clergy of that communion, we understand, are accustomed to keep a private list of those who are wont to receive the sacred elements at his hands, and if any are found to walk unworthily, their names are silently stricken off from the roll, and their communion with the church is dropped in this informal manner. Such pastoral fidelity, duly exercised,

denominations, men of equivocal character, if not of tarnished reputation, why do they in such numbers take refuge in that church? We wish to bring no unjust accusation against that denomination, but it seems to be admitted, by members of their own communion, that there is no discipline in the Episcopal church. "Every church warden in every parish in England is called upon once a year to attend the visitation of his archdeacon. At this time oaths are tendered to him respecting his different duties; and among other things he swears, that he will present to the archdeacon the names of all such inhabitants of his parish as are leading notoriously immoral lives. This oath is regularly taken once a year by every church warden in every parish in England; yet I believe that such a thing as any single presentation for notoriously immoral conduct has scarcely been heard of for a century."⁶⁴ Another of the Tractarians complains in the following terms of this total neglect of discipline in the Episcopal church. "I think the church has, in a measure, forgotten its own principles, as declared in the sixteenth century; nay, under stranger circumstances, as far as I know, than have attended any of the errors and corruptions of the Papists. Grievous as are their declensions from primitive usage, I never heard, in any case, of their practice directly contradicting their services; whereas, we go on lamenting, once a year, the absence of discipline in our church, yet do not even dream of taking any one step towards its restoration."⁶⁵

8. This mode of discipline gives spiritual life and power to the church.

is worthy of all consideration. But can it be expected, as a general rule, to accomplish the high ends of faithful Christian discipline? Is it the discipline of the New Testament? Or can it be expected of any class of men, that they will have the independence to be faithful here? A magnanimity how rare!

⁶⁴ Tracts for the Times, No. 59, p. 416.

⁶⁵ Ibid., No. 41, p. 297.

The moral efficacy of any body of believers depends, not upon their number, but upon the purity of their lives, and their fidelity in duty. A church composed of men who are a living exemplification of the power of the Christian religion by their holy lives, and by a faithful discharge of their duties,—such a church, and such only, is what the Lord Jesus designed his church should be,—the pillar and ground of the truth. Now this being conceded, under what form of discipline do you find the purest church? Where do you discover the greatest circumspection in the admission of members? Where, the strictest watch and fellowship, the kindest efforts to recover the fallen, and the most faithful endeavors to defend the honor of the Christian name, and for the revival of pure and undefiled religion? Without intending any invidious reflection, may we request of the reader a careful consideration of this subject? Let him remember, also, what his own observation may have taught him, that a single case of discipline, rightly conducted, gives new life and power to the whole body, quickening every member into newness of life in the service of the Lord. Let him estimate, if he can, the moral efficacy of a living church, quickened into healthful, holy action, compared with one that has a name to live and is dead. Let him ponder well these considerations, before he decides to go over to a communion that tolerates a general neglect of the Christian duty which we have been contemplating.

CHAPTER VI.

EQUALITY AND IDENTITY OF BISHOPS AND PRESBYTERS.

Soon after the ascension of our Lord, it became expedient for the brethren to appoint a certain class of officers to superintend the secular concerns of their fraternity. These were denominated *διδασκονοι*, *servants, ministers, deacons*. In process of time, another order of men arose among them, whose duty it was to superintend the religious interests of the church. These were denominated *οἱ προϊστάμενοι*, Rom. 12: 8. 1 Thess. 5: 12; *ἐκκλησιαστικοὶ*, Heb. 13: 7. 17, 24; *πρεσβύτεροι*, Acts 20: 17; *ἐπισκόποι*, Acts 20: 28, equivalent to the terms, *presidents, leaders, elders, overseers*. These terms all indicate one and the same office, *that of a presiding officer in their religious assemblies*. This class of officers is usually designated, by the apostles and the earliest ecclesiastical writers, as *presbyters* and *bishops*,—names which are used interchangeably and indiscriminately to denote one and the same office.

The appropriate duty of the bishop or presbyter at first was, not to teach or to preach, but to preside over the church, and to preserve order in their assemblies. "They were originally chosen as in the synagogue, not so much for the instruction and edification of the church, as for taking the lead in its general government."¹ The neces-

¹ Neander's *Apost. Kirch.*, I, p. 44, seq. Comp. Siegel, *Handbuch*, IV, p. 223. Ziegler's *Versuch, der Kirchlichen Verfassungsformen*, pp. 3—12. Rothe, *Anfänge*, I, p. 153. So, also, Gieseler, *Rheinwald, Bohmer, Winer, &c.*

sity of such a presiding officer in the church at Corinth is sufficiently apparent from the apostle's rebuke of their irregularities. "How is it, then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. . . Let all things be done unto edifying." 1 Cor. 14: 26. The apostle, however, allows all to prophesy, to exercise their spiritual gifts; and only requires them to speak "one by one," that all things may be done decently and in order. The ordinary officers of the apostolical church, then, comprised two distinct classes or orders. The one was known by the name of deacons; the other, designated by various titles, of which the ones most frequently used are presbyters and bishops.

Our proposition is, that Bishops and Presbyters; according to the usage of the apostles and of the earliest ecclesiastical writers, are identical and convertible terms, denoting one and the same class or grade of officers. In this proposition we join issue with the Episcopalians, who assert that bishops were divinely appointed an order of men superior to that of presbyters. We, on the other hand, affirm that presbyters are the highest grade of officers known in the apostolical and primitive churches; and that the title of bishop was originally only another name for precisely the same office. Even after a distinction began to be made between presbyter and bishop, we affirm that the latter were not a peculiar grade distinct from presbyters and superior to them; but merely one of the presbyters appointed from among them to preside over the college of his fellow-presbyters, belonging still to the same order, performing only the same pastoral duties, and exercising only the same spiritual functions; like the moderator of a modern presbytery or association, who still retains a ministerial parity with his brethren, in the duties, rights and privileges of the sacred office. Our sources of argu-



ment in defence of this general proposition are two-fold,
—Scripture and History.

I. The scriptural argument for the equality and identity of bishops and presbyters. This may be comprised in the following heads;

1. The appellations and titles of a presbyter are used indiscriminately and interchangeably with those of a bishop.

2. A presbyter is required to possess the same qualifications as a bishop.

3. The official duties of a presbyter are the same as those of a bishop.

4. There was, in the apostolical churches, no ordinary and permanent grade or class of ministers superior to that of presbyters.

1. The appellations and titles of a presbyter are used interchangeably with those of a bishop.

One of the most unequivocal proof-texts in the Scriptures is found in Acts 20: 17, compared with verse 28. Paul, on his journey to Jerusalem, sent from Miletus and called the *presbyters*, *πρεσβυτέρους*, *elders*, of Ephesus. And to these same presbyters, when they had come, he says, in his affectionate counsel to them, "Take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you *bishops*, *ἐπισκόπους*, to feed the church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood." Both terms are here used in the same sentence with reference to the same men.

We have another instance, equally clear, of the indiscriminate use of the terms, in the first chapter of Paul's epistle to Titus. "For this cause I left thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain *presbyters*, *πρεσβυτέρους*, in every city, as I had appointed thee." Then follows an enumeration of the

qualifications which are requisite in these presbyters, one of which is given in these words: "A *bishop* must be blameless, as the steward of God."

Again, it is worthy of particular attention, that the apostle, in his instructions to Timothy, 1 Tim. 3: 1—7, respecting the qualifications of a *bishop*, proceeds immediately to specify those of *deacons*, the *second class* of officers in the church, without making the least allusion to *presbyters*, though confessedly giving instructions for the appointment of the appropriate officers of the church. This omission was not a mere oversight in the writer, who subsequently alludes to the *presbytery*, 4: 14, and commends those that rule well, 5: 17. In these passages the apostle evidently has in mind the same offices, and uses the terms, bishop and presbyter, as identical in meaning.

To all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, again, the apostle addresses his salutation,—to the saints, with the *bishops* and *deacons*, that is, to the church and the officers of the church. Here, again, as in all the New Testament, these officers are distributed into two classes. For, had there been at Philippi a *third* order of ministers, superior to the deacons, it is incredible that the apostle could have omitted all allusion to them, in a salutation so specific. In truth, we must either charge the apostle with neglecting an important and superior class of officers in the church at Philippi,—a neglect totally inconsistent with the character of the apostle,—or we must admit that the presbyters are addressed in the salutation of the bishops as one and the same with them.

The supposition, again, that these were bishops of the Episcopal order, involves the absurdity of a plurality of bishops *over the same church*; a supposition at variance with the first principles of diocesan Episcopacy, which



admits of but *one* in a city.² This difficulty appears to have forcibly impressed the mind of Chrysostom. "How is this?" exclaims the eloquent patriarch. "Were there many bishops in the same city? By no means; but he calls the presbyters by this name [bishops]; for at that time this was the common appellation of both."³

Finally, we appeal to 1 Pet. 5: 2, 3, where the apostle, as a fellow-presbyter, exhorts the presbyters to feed the flock of God, *taking the oversight of them, επισκοπῶντες, acting the bishop, performing the duties of a bishop over them*, requiring of them the same duties which the apostle Paul enjoins upon the presbyter-bishops of Ephesus. As at Ephesus, where Paul gave his charge to those presbyters, so here, again, it is evident that there could have been no *bishop* over those whom Peter commits to the oversight of these *presbyters*. But who are the flock in this instance? Plainly, any body of those Christians scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, to whom he addresses his epistle. These Christians, throughout this vast extent of country, are committed to the care of their *presbyters*, who are severally to act as the pastors and *bishops* of their respective charges.

Thus it appears that the appellations and titles of a presbyter are used indiscriminately and interchangeably with those of a bishop. In the same sentence, even, and generally throughout the writings of the apostles, these are perfectly convertible terms, as different names of the same

² Epiphanius tells us, that Peter and Paul were both bishops of Rome at once: by which it is plain he took the title of bishop in another sense than now it is used; for now, and so for a long time upward, two bishops can no more possess one see, than two hedge-sparrows dwell in one bush. St. Peter's time was a little too early for bishops to rise.—*Hales' Works*, Vol. I, p. 110.

³ Σὺν ἐπισκόποις καὶ διακόνους. Τί τοῦτο; μίᾳ πόλει πολλοὶ ἐπίσκοποι ἦσαν; Οὐδαμῶς, ἀλλὰ τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους οὕτως ἐκάλεσε· τότε γὰρ τέως ἐκοινωνοῦν τοῖς ὀνόμασι.—*In Phil.* 1: 1, p. 199, seq., Tom. 11.

thing. This fact is very forcibly exhibited in the following summary from the Rev. Dr. Mason. "That the terms *bishop* and *presbyter*, in their application to the first class of officers, are perfectly convertible, the one pointing out the very same class of rulers with the other, is as evident as the sun 'shining in his strength.' Timothy was instructed by the apostle Paul in the qualities which were to be required in those who *desired the office of a BISHOP*.* Paul and Barnabas *ordained PRESBYTERS in every church*† which they had founded. Titus is directed to *ordain in every city PRESBYTERS* who are to be *blameless, the husband of one wife*. And the reason of so strict a scrutiny into character is thus rendered, *for a BISHOP must be blameless*.‡ If this does not identify the *bishop* with the *presbyter*, in the name of common sense, what can do it? Suppose a law, pointing out the qualifications of a sheriff, were to say, a *sheriff* must be a man of pure character, of great activity, and resolute spirit; for it is highly necessary that a *governor* be of unspotted reputation, &c., the bench and bar would be rather puzzled for a construction, and would be compelled to conclude, either that something had been left out in transcribing the law, or that governor and sheriff meant the same sort of officer; or that their honors of the legislature had taken leave of their wits. The case is not a whit stronger than the case of presbyter and bishop in the epistle to Titus. Again: Paul, when on his last journey to Jerusalem, sends for the PRESBYTERS of Ephesus to meet him at Miletum, and there enjoins these PRESBYTERS to *feed the church of God over which the Holy Ghost had made them BISHOPS*.§ It appears, then, that the *bishops* to whom Paul refers in his instructions to Timothy, were neither more nor less than plain *presbyters*. To a man who has no turn to serve, no interest in perverting the obvious meaning of words, one would think that a mathe-

* 1 Tim. 3: 1. † Acts 14: 23. ‡ Tit. 1: 5. § Acts 20: 17, 28.



matical demonstration could not carry more satisfactory evidence."⁴

These terms, as the reader must have noticed, are also distinct and definite, descriptive of a peculiar office, which he is in no danger of mistaking for any other in the apostolic church. The name of *apostle* is not in a single instance exchanged for that of bishop, presbyter, or deacon, neither are the terms, bishop and presbyter, confounded with any other title, and for the very obvious reason, that they are descriptive of an office distinct from all others. Why, then, are these particular terms mutually interchanged one with the other, save that they are equally descriptive of the same office? Indeed, the identity of bishops and presbyters in name, is now conceded by Episcopalians themselves. "That presbyters were called bishops I readily grant; that this proves that the officer who was then called a bishop, and consequently the office, was the same."⁵ "The Episcopalian cannot be found who denies the interchangeable employment of the terms bishop and presbyter in the New Testament."⁶ Bishop Burnet admits that they "are used promiscuously by the writers of the first two centuries."

The scriptural title of the office under consideration is usually that of presbyter or elder. It had long been in use in the synagogue. It denoted an office familiar to every Jew. It conveyed precise ideas of a ruler whose powers were well defined and perfectly understood. When adopted into the Christian church, its meaning must have been easily settled, for it was essentially the same in the church as previously in the synagogue. Accordingly, it constantly occurs in the writings of the apostle, to denote an officer

⁴ Mason's Works, Vol. III, pp. 41—43. Comp. King, Prim. Christ., pp. 67, 68.

⁵ Bowden, Works on Episcop., Vol. I, p. 161.

⁶ Chapman, cited in Smyth's Pres. and Prelacy, p. 111.

familiarly known, but having no resemblance to a modern diocesan bishop. The term, bishop, occurs but five times in the New Testament; and, in each instance, in such a connection as to be easily identified with that of presbyter. The former is derived from the Greek language, the latter has a Jewish origin. Accordingly, it is worthy of notice, that the apostles, when addressing Jewish Christians, use the term presbyter; but in their addresses to Gentile converts, they adopt the term *bishop*, as less obnoxious to those who spoke the Greek language.⁷

2. A presbyter is required to possess the same qualifications as a bishop.

The apostle has specified at length the qualifications, both for a bishop and a presbyter, which, for the sake of comparison, are here set in opposite columns.

QUALIFICATIONS.

For a bishop, 1 Tim. 3: 2—7.

A bishop must be blameless, the husband of one wife, one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity. For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God? Vs. 2, 4, 5.

Vigilant, *νηφελῶς*, *circumspect*, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach. Vs. 2.

For a presbyter, Tit. 1: 6—10.

If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children, (who are) not accused of riot, or unruly. V. 6.

A lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate, holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort, and to convince the gainsayers. Vs. 8, 9.

⁷ Rothe, *Anfänge*, 1, 218, 219. Neander, *Apost. Kirch.*, 1, 178; 179. Shoene, *Geschichtsforschungen*, 1, 247—249. Comp. Bishop Croft, in Smyth's *Apost. Succ.*, p. 159.

Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre, but patient, *επιεικῇ*, gentle, not soon angry, not a brawler, not covetous, not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover, he must have a good report of them which are without, lest he fall into reproach, and the snare of the devil. Vs. 3, 6, 7.

A bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God, not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre. V. 7.

The qualifications are identical throughout. Is a blameless, sober, virtuous life, a meek and quiet spirit, required of a bishop? so is it of a presbyter. Whatever is needful for the one, is equally essential for the other. If, then, there be this wide and perpetual distinction between the two, which Episcopacy claims, how extraordinary that the apostle, when stating the qualifications of a humble presbyter, should not abate an iota from those which are requisite for the high office of a bishop. How strong the presumption, rather how irresistible the conviction, that this dignity of the church was totally unknown in these days of primitive, republican simplicity; and that the bishop of the apostolic churches was neither more nor less than a plain, simple presbyter, the pastor of any church over which he may have been duly constituted. The conclusion, therefore, is irresistible, that, in the case before us, the author is only designating the same office by different names, of similar import. Such is the decision of the great Jerome, the most learned of the Latin fathers. "In both epistles," referring to these now under consideration, "whether bishops or presbyters are to be elected (for with the ancients, bishops and presbyters must have been the same,

the one being descriptive of rank and the other of age) they are required to be the husbands of one wife." ⁸

3. The duties of a presbyter are the same as those of a bishop.

As bishops and presbyters are called by the same names, and required to possess the same qualifications, *so they are summoned to discharge the same official duties.* Their duties, severally and equally, were to rule, to counsel and instruct, to administer the ordinances, and to ordain.

(a) Both exercised the same authority over the church.

If bishops were known in the apostolical churches, as a distinct order, the right of government confessedly belonged to them. We have, therefore, only to show that presbyters exercised the same right. This exercise of authority is denoted in the New Testament by several terms, each of which is distinctly applied to presbyters.

(α) Such is *ἡγεμαί*, *to lead, to guide, &c.* In Heb. 13: 7 and 17, this term occurs. Remember them that have the rule over you, *τῶν ἡγουμένων ὑμῶν*. Obey them that have rule over you, *τοῖς ἡγουμένοις ὑμῶν*. The first exhortation to the Hebrews the apostle enforces by an immediate reference to their *deceased pastors*; and the second, to those who still survived to watch for their souls. Is the reference here to a diocesan bishop, or to those presbyters who regularly performed to these Hebrews the duties of a presbyter?

(β) Another term, expressive of authority over the church is, *πρωτοστῆμι*, *to preside, to rule.* Xenophon uses this verb to express the act of leading or ruling an ancient

⁸ In utraque epistola sive episcopi sive presbyteri (quanquam apud veteres iidem episcopi et presbyteri fuerint quia illud nomen dignitatis est, hoc ætatis) jubentur monogami in clerum eligi.—*Ep. 83, ad Oceanum*, Tom. 4, p. 648.

chorus and an army.⁹ Paul the apostle uses the same to express the authority which the presbyters exercised as *rulers* of the church.

"We beseech you, brethren, to know them which labor among you and *are over you*, προισταμένους, in the Lord." 1 Thess. 5: 12. Prelates of the church these *presbyters* cannot be, for there are several, it appears, in this single city, a circumstance totally incompatible with the organization of diocesan Episcopacy. The whole, taken together, is descriptive, not of a bishop in his see, but of a presbyter, a pastor, in the faithful discharge of his parochial duties. Again, "Let the elders, presbyters, that *rule well*, be accounted worthy of double honor," δι' καλῶς προϊστώτες πρεσβύτεροι. 1 Tim. 5: 17. Here are presbyters ruling over the church of Ephesus, where, according to the Episcopal theory, Timothy, as bishop, has established the seat of his apostolical see.

(γ) Another term of frequent occurrence, in writers both sacred and profane of approved authority, is ποιμαίνω, *to feed*, metaphorically, *to cherish, to provide for, to rule, to govern*. It expresses the office, and comprehends all the duties of a shepherd. This term the apostle uses in his exhortation to the *presbyters* of Ephesus at Miletus. "Take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you *bishops, to feed*, ποιμαίνειν, the church of God." This term, beyond all question, expresses the power of government, both in classic and hellenistic Greek. Both this and ἡγούμενος above mentioned, are used in the same passage to express the government of Christ, the chief Shepherd, over his people Israel. "Thou, Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not

⁹ Οὐδὲν ὅμοιον ἐστὶ χοροῦ τε καὶ στρατεύματος προεστάναι. "Between the *taking the lead* of a chorus and the *command* of an army," both expressed by προεστάναι, "there is no analogy."—Mem., 3, 4, 5.

the least among the princes of Juda, for out of thee shall come a governor, ἡγούμενος, who shall rule, ποιμανεῖ, my people Israel." Without further illustration, which might easily be extended, we have sufficient evidence, from what has been said, that the presbyters were invested with all the authority to guide, govern, and provide for the church, which the bishop himself could exercise. The very same terms which express the highest power of government, and which are applied to the office even of the great Head of the church, are used to express the authority of presbyters, and to set forth the power with which they are invested to rule and feed the church. No intimation is given of any higher power in any minister of Christ; neither have we terms to express any superior authority. The conclusion therefore is, that they "are invested with the highest power of government known in the church."

(b) Presbyters are the authorized *counsellors of the church*; and, in connection with the apostles, constitute the highest court of appeal for the settlement of controversies in the church.

About the year 45 or 50, a spirited controversy arose at Antioch, which threatened to rend the church, and to subvert the gospel which Paul and Barnabas had begun successfully to preach to the Gentiles. It was of the utmost importance that this dispute should be immediately and finally settled. For this purpose, a delegation, consisting of Paul, and Barnabas, and others, were sent from the church at Antioch, on an embassy to Jerusalem, to submit the subject under discussion to the decision of the church, with the apostles and presbyters. This delegation was kindly received by the church at Jerusalem, with their appropriate officers, the apostles, teachers, and elders, to whom the whole subject of the dissension at Antioch was submitted. Peter, John and James were, at this time, at Jerusalem, and, with Paul, Barnabas and Titus,



were members of this council. The subject was discussed at length on both sides, but the concurring opinions of Peter, Paul and James finally prevailed, and the council concurred harmoniously in the sentiments expressed by these apostles. It is observable, however, that the *result of the council* is given, not in the name of James,¹⁰ or any one of the apostles, but conjointly, by the apostles, and *presbyters*, and brethren. Acts 15: 23. With this decision the delegation return to Antioch, accompanied by Judas and Silas. The message of the council was received by the assembled church at Antioch, who gladly acquiesced in that decision. Throughout the whole narrative the presbyters appear as the authorized counsellors of the church, and *the only ordinary officers of the church*, whose opinion is sought in connection with that of the apostles, without any intimation of an intermediate grade of bishops.¹¹

(c) It was the appropriate office of the presbyters to administer the ordinances of the church.

It is inconceivable that the performance of these duties could have been restricted to the apostles. The sacrament

¹⁰ That James did not draw up this decree as "the head of the church at Jerusalem," and as his "authoritative sentence," is unanswerably shown by Rev. Dr. Mason, in his Review of Essays on Episcopacy. The amount of the argument is, that James *simply expresses his opinion*, verse 19; just as Peter and Paul had done before. So the word, *ἡγορω*, in the connection in which it is used, implies, and so it was understood by the sacred historian, who, in Acts 16: 4, declares, that the "authoritative sentence," the decrees, were ordained by the *apostles and presbyters*. Comp., also, Acts 21: 25. The case was not referred to James, neither could it be submitted to him as bishop of Jerusalem, Antioch lying entirely without his diocese, even on the supposition that Jerusalem was the seat of his Episcopal see. The authority of this decree was also acknowledged in all the churches of Asia. The supposition, that it was the official and authoritative sentence of James as bishop, exalts him above all the other apostles who were members of the council, and gives him a power, far-reaching and authoritative beyond that which belonged to St. Peter himself, the prelatical head of the church.

¹¹ Comp. Rothe, *Anfänge*, Vol. I, pp. 181, 182.

was at first administered daily,¹² and afterwards on each Lord's-day as a part of public worship, and occasionally at other times. The frequency and universality of the ordinance of necessity required that it should be administered by the ordinary ministers of the church. Baptism, by a like necessity, devolved upon them. The numerous and far-spreading triumphs of the gospel utterly forbid the idea, that the apostles, few in number, and charged with the high commission of preaching the gospel, and giving themselves wholly to this as their appropriate work, should have found time and means of going every where, and baptizing with their own hands all that believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. Besides, they appear expressly to have disclaimed this work, and to have entrusted the service chiefly to other hands. "I thank God that I baptized none of you but Crispus and Gaius. And I baptized also the household of Stephanas; besides, I know not whether I baptized any other. For Christ sent me, not to baptize, but to preach." 1 Cor. 1: 14—17. Cornelius, again, was baptized, not by Peter, but by some Christian disciples, agreeably to his command. The apostles, indeed, very seldom baptized. The inference therefore is, that this service was by them committed to the presbyters, the ordinary officers of the church.

The right of presbyters to administer these ordinances is clearly asserted by Augusti and other writers on the subject, as stated in our Christian Antiquities.¹³ Even the Episcopalian, who claims these as the official duties of the bishop, and maintains that the presbyter only acted as his representative, still admits that, previous to the establishment of the Episcopal system, these duties were performed by presbyters. To this effect is one of the latest and best authorities. "In the earliest times, when no formal distinction between *ἐπισκοποι* [*bishops*], and *πρεσβύτεροι* [*presbyters*], had taken place, the presbyters, especially the

¹² Neander, Apost. Kirch., 1, p. 30.

¹³ Chap. III, § 8.

προσβιῶτες [*presiding presbyters*], 1 Tim. 5: 17, discharged those Episcopal functions, which, afterwards, when a careful distinction of ecclesiastical officers had been made, they were not permitted to discharge, otherwise than as substitutes or vicars of a bishop. Instances, however, do sometimes occur in later times, of presbyters having officiated in matters which, according to the canon law, belonged only to the Episcopal office."¹⁴

Tertullian asserts the right even of the *laity* both to baptize, *tingere*, and to administer the sacrament, *offere*. His reasons are, that the distinction between the clergy and laity is the device of the church,—that in the Scriptures all are priests of God, and that, having the right of priesthood in themselves, the laity are at liberty to perform the offices of the priesthood, as they may have occasion.¹⁵

Even Rigaltius, a Roman Catholic, in commenting on this passage, admits that the laity were permitted, in the primitive church, to administer the ordinances, though it was afterwards forbidden in the ecclesiastical law. The same is also affirmed by the learned Erasmus.¹⁶ If further

¹⁴ Riddle, Chr. Antiquities, p. 233.

¹⁵ Vani erimus si putaverimus, quod sacerdotibus non liceat, laicis licere. Nonne et laici sacerdotes sumus? Scriptum est regnum quoque nos et sacerdotes Deo et Patri suo fecit. *Differentiam inter ordinem et plebem constituit ecclesiae auctoritas*, et honor per ordinis consensum sanctificatus a Deo, ibi ecclesiastici ordinis non est confessus? Et *offers et tinguis*; sacerdos es tibi solus. Sed ubi tres, ecclesia est, licet laici; unusquisque de sua fide vivit; nec est personarum exceptio apud Deum, quoniam non auditores legis justificabuntur a Deo, sed factores, secundum quod et apostolus dicit. *Igitur si habes jus sacerdotis in temetipso ubi necesse sit, habeas oportet etiam disciplinam sacerdotis*, ubi necesse sit habere jus sacerdotis.—*De Exhort. Cast.*, c. 7. The same thing also is implied in another passage, from Tertullian, *De Virgin. Vel.*, c. 9, in which he denies to *women* this right. The denial of the right to *women* is an admission that it was the authorized prerogative of the other sex.

¹⁶ Constat temporibus apostolorum fuisse synaxin quam laici inter se faciebant adhibita praecatione et benedictione, et eam panem, ut est probabile, appellabant corpus Domini, ut frequenter etiam sacris literis eadem vox signo et rei signatae accommodatur Fieri enim potest ut de hac synaxi loquatur ibi Origenes.—*Ep.*, Lib. 26, Tom. 3. Origen, in the

evidence of the fact were needful it is given at length by Grotius.¹⁷

(d) It was the right of presbyters to ordain.

What reason can be assigned, may we ask, why they should not solemnize this rite, as well as perform other ministerial duties? What solemnity has the rite above all others, to restrict the performance of it to a certain order of the priesthood? It is the right of presbyters to baptize, to administer the sacrament, to instruct and provide for all the spiritual wants of the flock of Christ, as the shepherd and bishop of their souls, and have they no right to induct into the sacred office, their fellow-laborers and successors in the service of the chief Shepherd?¹⁸ Until instructed to the contrary by the word of God, we must presume that the right to ordain belongs to those presbyters whom the Holy Ghost has made overseers of the flock, to feed the church of God.

The subject of our present inquiry hardly admits of an appeal to Scripture; for the writers of the New Testament have left us no specific instructions on this subject. Neither have we any uniform precedent in the apostolical churches. The apostles were not set apart by any solemnity beside their commission from Christ. He lifted up his hands, indeed, and blessed them, as he was parted from them, and they were filled with the Holy Ghost. The act was significant of the miraculous communication of spiritual gifts, as in various other instances, Acts 8: 17. 19: 6; but had no analogy to Episcopal ordination. No record is given of any formal ordination of Matthias, save his formal election to the apostolical office.

middle of the third century, was permitted by two bishops, in Palestine, to explain the Scriptures to their congregation, though he had never been ordained. And many bishops of the East, according to Eusebius, allowed even the laity to preach.—*Ecc. Hist.*, 6, c. 19. Comp. Neander, *Allgemein. Gesch.*, 1, p. 336, 2d edit.

¹⁷ Tract., *De Coenae Administratione ubi pastores non sunt.*

¹⁸ Comp. Gerhardi, *Loci Theolog.*, Tom. 12, p. 159.



The seven deacons were inducted into their office by prayer, and *the laying on of hands*. This may have been, and perhaps was, the usual mode of setting apart any to a religious service. But was the imposition of hands exclusively ordination? It was a rite familiar to the Jews; and denoted *either a benediction, or the communication of miraculous gifts*. Jacob, in blessing the sons of Joseph, laid his hands upon their head. So Jesus took young children in his arms and blessed them, *laying his hands upon them*. So Paul and Barnabas were dismissed, to go on their missionary tour, with the blessing of the brethren at Antioch, by the laying on of hands, Acts 13: 3. But they had long been engaged in ministerial duties.

The imposition of hands appears also to have been admitted more than once, as in the case of Timothy, upon whom this rite was performed by the presbytery, 1 Tim. 4: 14; and again, by the apostle Paul, 2 Tim. 1: 6. Such at least is the understanding which Rothe has of the case.¹⁹ This fact forbids the supposition, that the laying on of hands was the solemnizing rite in the act of ordination, which, according to all ecclesiastical usage, cannot be repeated. In the passage, Acts 14: 23, the phrase *χειροτονήσαντες*, &c., has been already shown to relate, not to the consecration, but to the *appointment* of the elders in every church.²⁰

¹⁹ Rothe, *Anfänge der Christ. Kirch.*, p. 161.

²⁰ "Where, it may be asked, resides the *right*, or power, and in what consists the importance of *ordination*? It is not the source of ministerial authority; for that, as it has been endeavored to show, does not, and cannot, rest on any human foundation. It does not admit to the pastoral office; for even in the Episcopal church, the title to office, which is an indispensable pre-requisite, is derived from the nomination of the person who has the disposal of the case. It is not office, but official character, which Episcopal ordination is supposed to convey, together with whatsoever the advocates of Episcopacy may choose to understand by those solemn words, used by the ordaining bishop (an application of them which Nonconformists deem awfully inappropriate), 'Receive the Holy Ghost.'

The imposition of hands is a rite derived from the Jews, and significant of the communication of the gifts of the Father. This venerable rite was used by Christ, and with great propriety has been retained in the Christian church. But with the apostles it was the customary mode of imparting the *χαρίσματα*, the miraculous gifts of that age. So the converts at Samaria received the Holy Ghost, Acts 8: 17, and in the like manner, when Paul had laid his hands upon the Ephesian converts, the Holy Ghost came upon them, *and they spake with tongues and prophesied*, Acts 19: 6. In the same sense is to be understood the gift, *χαρίσμα*, which was given to Timothy by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery, 1 Tim. 4: 14. The meaning simply is, that by the imposition of hands that peculiar spiritual gift denominated *prophecy* was im-

The Jewish ordination, on the contrary, although sometimes accompanied, when administered by the apostles, by the communication of miraculous gifts, was in itself no more than a significant form of benediction on admission to a specific appointment. Of this nature were the offices connected with the synagogue, in contradistinction from those of the priesthood. When Paul and Barnabas were sent out from the church at Antioch, they submitted to the same impressive ceremony: not surely that either authority, or power of any kind, or miraculous qualifications, devolved upon the apostle and his illustrious companion, by virtue of the imposition of Presbyterian hands! What then is ordination? *The answer is, a decent and becoming solemnity, adopted from the Jewish customs by the primitive church, significant of the separation of an individual to some specific appointment in the Christian ministry, and constituting both a recognition on the part of the officiating presbyters, of the ministerial character of the person appointed, and a desirable sanction of the proceedings of the church.* It is, however, something more than a mere circumstance, the imposition of hands being designed to express that fervent benediction which accompanied the ceremony, and which constitutes the true spirit of the rite. To an occasion which, when the awful responsibility of the pastoral charge is adequately felt, imparts to the prayers and the affectionate aid of those who are fathers and brethren in the ministry, a more especial value, the sign and solemn act of benediction must appear peculiarly appropriate. This venerable ceremony may also be regarded as a sort of bond of fellowship among the churches of Christ, a sign of unity, and an act of brotherhood."—*Conder's Protestant Nonconformity*, Vol. I, p. 242.



parted to Timothy.²¹ Of the same import are 2 Tim. 1 : 6, and 1 Tim. 5 : 22. Both relate to the communication of spiritual gifts. If the rite of ordination was implied and included in it, then the same act must be expressive both of this induction into office, and of the communication of spiritual gifts. Such is Neander's explanation of the transaction. "The consecration to offices in the church was conducted in the following manner. After those persons to whom its performance belonged, had laid their hands on the head of the candidate,—a symbolic action borrowed from the Jewish קִיָּיָה, —they besought the Lord that he would grant, what this symbol denoted, the impartation of the gifts of his Spirit for carrying on the office thus undertaken in his name. If, as was presumed, the whole ceremony corresponded to its intent, and the requisite disposition existed in those for whom it was performed, there was reason for considering the communication of the spiritual gifts necessary for the office, as connected with this consecration performed in the name of Christ. And since Paul from this point of view designated the whole of the solemn proceeding (without separating it into its various elements), by that which was its external symbol (as, in scriptural phraseology, a single act of a transaction consisting of several parts, and sometimes that which was most striking to the senses, is often mentioned for the whole); he required of Timothy that he should seek to revive afresh the spiritual gifts that he had received by the laying on of hands."²²

The question has been asked, but never yet answered, who ordained Apollos? See Acts 18: 24—26. 1 Cor. 3: 5—7.

It remains to consider the case of Paul the apostle. Of whom did he receive ordination? One Ananias, a disciple and a devout man according to the law, and having a good

²¹ Rothe, *Anfänge*, 1, p. 161.

²² Neander, *Apost. Kirch.*, 1, 213. *Comp.* pp. 88, 300, 3d edit.

report of all the Jews that dwelt at Damascus,—this man prayed and laid his hands upon Paul, and *straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues*. Soon after this he spent three years in Arabia; then, for a whole year together, he and Barnabas *assembled themselves with the church and taught much people* at Antioch, Acts 11: 26. After all this, he was sent forth by the Holy Ghost, on his mission to the Gentiles. Preparatory to this mission he was recommended to the grace of God for the work, by fasting, prayer and the imposition of hands. Even this was not done by any of the apostles, but by certain prophets and teachers, such as Simeon, Lucius and Manaen. Even on the supposition, therefore, that these were the solemnities of Paul's ordination, he was not Episcopally ordained. But, in truth, they had no reference whatever to his ordination. On the authority of his divine commission, he had already been a preacher for several years. It was, not a new appointment, but an appointment to a new work, which in no degree helps forward the cause of prelatical ordination.²³

We have, indeed, adopted from apostolic usage, a significant, impressive and becoming rite, by which to induct one into the sacred office of the ministry. The rite ought always to be observed. But no direct precept, no uniform usage, gives to this rite the sanction of divine authority; above all, there is not in all the Scriptures, the least authority for the exclusive administration of it by the bishop alone. The idea of a bishop receiving the Holy Ghost in regular succession from the holy apostles, and transmitting the heavenly grace by the laying on of his hands is a figment of prelatical pride and fanaticism, unknown either in Scripture, or in the earliest ages of the church. But the historical argument in relation to the subject of ordination by presbyters is considered below.

²³ Bowdler's Letters on Apostolical Succession, p. 22.

The claims of Episcopacy, on the ground of an original distinction between the names and titles of bishop and presbyters seem now to be wholly abandoned, even by Episcopalians themselves. "Even if Timothy," says the *Christian Observer*, "had been distinctly called bishop of Ephesus, and Titus bishop of Crete, Episcopalians would build nothing on that nomenclature as regards Episcopacy, being a distinct order from Presbytery, for presbyters are admitted to have been called bishops. The disparity is proved by other considerations."²⁴

Even the church of Rome acknowledges the identity of the orders of presbyter and bishop, and reckons among the three greater, or holy orders, those of priest, deacon, and subdeacon.

Bishop Onderdonk makes also the same concession. "As some readers of this essay may not be familiar with the controversy, it is proper to advert to the fact, that the name 'bishops,' which now designates the highest grade of the ministry, is not appropriated to that office in Scripture. That name is given to the middle order, or *presbyters*; and all that we read in the New Testament, concerning 'bishops' (including, of course, the words 'overseers' and 'oversight,' which have the same derivation), is to be regarded as pertaining to that middle grade." Bishops and presbyters are identical, then, in the Scriptures, according to our American bishop, who traces his own descent from a higher grade known by no specific name in Scripture, such as the apostles, and Titus and Timothy, and the angels of the seven churches, who are not honored with any official title, as a distinct order or grade.²⁵ The whole fabric of Episcopacy

²⁴ *Christian Observer*, 1842, p. 59.

²⁵ The highest grade is there found in those called apostles, and in some other individuals, as Titus and Timothy, and the angels of the seven churches of Asia, who have no official designation given them. It was after the apostolic age that the name 'bishop' was taken from the second order and appropriated to the first.—*Bishop Onderdonk's Episcopacy, tested by Scripture.*

is here made to lean on a certain nameless grade, whose successors have uncourtously appropriated to themselves exclusively an official title which by divine right belonged to the presbyters. The issue of the argument, accordingly, turns chiefly upon the proposition which comes next under consideration.

4. There was, in the apostolical churches, no *ordinary* class of ministers superior to that of presbyters or bishops:

We deny entirely that Timothy, or Titus, or any other person, or class of persons named in Scripture, represents a grade, or order of ministers in the churches planted by the apostles, who were invested with prerogatives superior to those of presbyters; and whose office was to be perpetuated in the church of Christ. In opposition to these Episcopal pretensions, we remark:

1. That no distinct appellation is given to the supposed order, and no class of religious teachers represents them in the Scriptures.

If there be such an order, it is surely extraordinary that it should be left without a name, or a distinctive appellation of any kind. Here is a high grade, possessed of exclusive ministerial rights and powers, from whom all clerical grace has been transmitted by Episcopal succession, age after age, down to the present time; and yet distinguished by no appellation, represented by no single class or order of men. The inferior grades, presbyters and deacons, are specified with great distinctness, but the highest and most important of all has no definite name, no distinct and single representative. And yet your bishop, with astonishing credulity, runs backward his spiritual lineage up, I had almost said, through a thousand generations, in strange uncertainty all the while, to whom he shall at last attach himself, or with whom claim kindred. If Peter fails him, he flies to Paul, to James, to Timothy, to Titus, to the angel of the church, to—he knows not whom. He is, however, a legitimate de-

scendant and successor of some apostolical bishop. He is sure of that; but that bishop—nobody knows who he is, or what his office may have been,—*stat nominis umbra*.

2. We deny that the Scriptures give any authority for ascribing to either of the apostles, or to their assistants and fellow-laborers, the exercise of Episcopal authority.

The fathers do indeed concur in assigning Episcopal sees to several of the apostles, and to their helpers. And modern Episcopalians refer us with great confidence to James, to Timothy, Titus, and to the angel of the church in the epistles of the apocalypse, as instances of primitive bishops. Now we deny that either of these exercised the rights and prerogatives of an Episcopal bishop.

(a) James was not bishop of Jerusalem.

We have already seen²⁶ with what care the apostles guarded against the assumption of authority over the churches. They taught, they counselled, they administered, they reprov'd, indeed, with the authority of ambassadors of God and ministers of Christ. But they assumed not to rule and to govern with the official power of a diocesan. The evidence of this position is already before the reader, and to his consideration we submit it without further remark.

But James, it is said, resided at Jerusalem, as bishop of that church and diocese; and, in this capacity, offers us a scriptural example of an apostolical bishop. The Episcopal functions of this bishop, therefore, require a particular consideration.

In the days of Claudius Cæsar, arose a dearth throughout Judea, so distressing that a charitable collection was taken up and forwarded by the hands of Barnabas and Saul, to the brethren in Judea, residing in the reputed

diocese of this bishop of Jerusalem. To whom was this charity sent? Not to the bishop, but to the *presbyters*, the appropriate officers of that church, Acts 11: 30.

The delegation from Antioch was sent, not to the bishop, but to the *apostles and presbyters*, Acts 15: 2. This delegation should have been received, it would seem, by the bishop, as the official organ of the church. But, instead of this, they are hospitably received by the church, and the apostles, and the presbyters. Not a syllable is said of the bishop. The council convene to consider the question which was submitted for their decision. Who compose this council? The apostles and presbyters, again, without any mention of the bishop. After the discussion, in which James bears indeed a prominent part with the other apostles, who act in making up the result? The apostles and presbyters. *It seemed good to the apostles and presbyters, with all the church.* Who appear in the salutation of the letter addressed to the church at Antioch? The apostles, the presbyters and the brethren. Mention is again made, Acts 16: 4, of the decrees of this council. Who now appear as the authors of these decrees? The apostles and presbyters. Where is our diocesan all this time? Plainly he has no official character as such. A bishop over this community, just now living together in the simplicity of their mutual love, is an idle fancy, devoid alike of reality, of influence, and of name. Had James been bishop of Jerusalem at this time, would he not have acted a conspicuous part in all these concerns, as we have seen that the presbyters did? Would not his high office have given him a place vastly more prominent than theirs in all these transactions; whereas they, with the apostles, are the chief actors, as the individuals upon whom rests the government of the church at Jerusalem.²⁷

James appears to have resided chiefly at this city

²⁷ Rothe, Anfänge, Vol I, p. 267, seq.



for good and sufficient reasons, without remaining there as the prelatical head of that church or diocese. The holy city was the seat of the Christian religion, and to the apostles, the centre of their operations. It was the church to which all referred, like the church at Antioch, as they might have occasion, for counsel, instruction and support. What more natural than that one of the twelve should remain, as the representative of the college of the apostles, to give direction to their operations and their councils? And for this important trust, James, one of the kindred of our Lord according to the flesh, from his youth a Nazarene, intimately acquainted with all the national peculiarities and prejudices of the Jews, and a blameless and a faithful follower of Christ, was eminently qualified. The testimony of Hegesippus is that "he was holy from his mother's womb," that upon account of his most eminent righteousness he was styled the Just. He represents the Scribes and Pharisees as saying to him, "We all put our confidence in thee; and we, and all the people, bear thee witness that thou art just, and respectest not the person of any man."²⁸ James the just, then, remained at Jerusalem, as the delegate of the college of the apostles, and the honored counsellor and adviser of the churches, but with no pretensions to diocesan or prelatical authority over them.

As a Jew, as the brother of our Lord, as well as by the amiable characteristics mentioned above, he was eminently qualified to act as mediator between the opposite parties of Jew and Gentile converts; and to counsel, and to act for the peace of the church. But in all this he acted, not as a bishop, but as an apostle, in that divine character, and by that authority, which he possessed as an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, and which, as Neander has well observed, could be delegated to none other.²⁹

²⁸ Euseb., Eccl. Hist., Lib. 2, c. 23.

²⁹ Introduction, p. 19. Also Apost. Kirch., 2, c. 1, p. 14, seq.

But do not Clement of Alexandria,³⁰ Hegesippus,³¹ the Apostolical Constitutions,³² Eusebius,³³ Cyril of Jerusalem,³⁴ Epiphanius,³⁵ Chrysostom,³⁶ Jerome,³⁷ Augustine,³⁸ and many others of later date, all agree that James was bishop of Jerusalem? Grant it all. These all characterize him as bishop of Jerusalem. And yet not satisfied that James was bishop of this parent church? No, by no means. Their declaration only relates to a disputed point in the history of the Acts of the Apostles, upon which we, perhaps, are as competent to decide as they. With the same historical data in view, why cannot a judgment be made up upon them as safely in the nineteenth century as in the third or the fifth? With what propriety these ancient fathers denominate James bishop of Jerusalem, let the reader himself judge in view of the foregoing considerations.

But Hegesippus lived in the second century, within one hundred years of the apostolic age, and must be an unexceptionable witness. What then is his testimony? Simply that he took charge of the church *in connection with the apostles*, for such must the term *μετά* imply, if it means any thing. This use of this preposition, however, is not common, and the authenticity of the passage is doubtful, *διαδέχεται δὲ—τὴν ἐκκλησίαν μετὰ τῶν ἀποστόλων*. He remained chiefly at Jerusalem, the centre of operation for all of the apostles, and had, if you please, the immediate supervision of this church in connection with the other apostles. Aside from the Scriptures, therefore, nothing

³⁰ Euseb., Eccl. Hist., 2, c. 1.

³¹ Euseb., Eccl. Hist., 2, c. 23.

³² Lib. 6, Ep. 14, p. 346.

³³ Lib. 2, c. 1. 2, c. 23. 3, c. 5. 7, c. 19. Comment. ad Isac. 17: 5, Tom. 2, p. 422. Montfaucon, Collec. Nov. Pat. et Scrip. Græc., ed., Paris, 1706.

³⁴ Catech., 4, Ep. 23, p. 65, ed. Tontée.

³⁵ Hæv., 78. Antidicomarianitar, § 5, p. 1039.

³⁶ Hom. 38, in Ep. ad Corinth, Tom. 10, p. 355.

³⁷ Catal. Script. Eccl., s. v. Jacob, frater Domini, Tom. 1, p. 170. Comment. in Ep. ad Gal. 1: 19. Tom. 9, p. 123.

³⁸ Contra literas Petilian, L. 2, c. 51, § 118, Tom. 9, p. 172.

appears from this writer to show that he exercised the independent authority of bishop over the church. After the rise of the hierarchy, the Episcopal fathers that have been mentioned may have interpreted the testimony of this author into a declaration of the Episcopal office of James. If so, we are at liberty to challenge the authority of these fathers on the point under consideration. Like them we have the historical record before us, and the means of forming an independent opinion.³⁹

Indeed, antiquity itself, in the language of Milton, "hath turned over the controversy to that sovereign book which we had fondly straggled from." After refuting other traditions, he adds, "as little can your advantage be from Hegesippus, an historian, of the same time, not extant, but cited by Eusebius. His words are, 'that in every city all things so stood in his time as the law and the prophets, and our Lord did preach.' If they stood so, then stood not bishops above presbyters. For what our Lord and his disciples taught, God be thanked, we have no need to go learn of him."⁴⁰

The churches, as we have already seen, were at this time entirely independent. They had no confederate relations, one toward another. They were, simply, any number of believers associated together by common consent, for the enjoyment of the word and ordinances of their common Lord. Besides their union of faith and fellowship of spirit, they had one bond of union in the instruction, care and oversight which the apostles exercised in common over all the churches. This general supervision the apostles exercised conjointly, and thus formed a common bond of connection between the different fraternities; going themselves, from place to place, confirming the churches, and reporting to each the faith and piety of such

³⁹ Rothe, *Anfänge der Christ. Kirch.*, 1, 263—272.

⁴⁰ *Prose Works*, Vol. I, p. 86.

as they had visited. What care the apostle Paul took to encourage this fellowship of the churches is gratefully manifested in the salutations which he sends in their behalf. *All the churches of Christ salute you*, Rom. 16: 16. *The churches of Asia salute you. All the brethren greet you*, 1 Cor. 16: 19, 20.

Under these circumstances, the churches severally referred to the apostles, for instruction, for counsel, and for assistance, as they might have occasion. This oversight the apostles carefully exercised; caring for all, and watching for all, as they had opportunity, that thus they might, as far as possible, supply the place of their Lord, and fulfil the ministry which they had received from him. In the distribution of their labors, by mutual consent, they occupied, to a great extent, their separate fields. Some going to the heathen, and others to the circumcision, Gal. 2: 7—9. But none had any settled cure, or any prescribed field of labor, bearing the remotest analogy to a modern diocese. Paul was greatly oppressed by the care of *all the churches*, which came daily upon him. Who is weak and I am not weak? Who is offended and I burn not? 2 Cor. 11: 29. So that while each may have been the apostle of particular churches, each and every one exercised a common oversight and jurisdiction over all, by whomsoever they may have been originally organized. Nor was this jurisdiction of the several apostles exercised by them on their own individual responsibility, but in common rather as fellow-apostles and co-workers, for the rearing up of the church of Christ, and the extension of his kingdom. In a word, the government of the churches was vested in the apostles, not individually, but *collectively*; and each exercised his authority as a joint member of the apostolical body, who were ordained and endowed with grace to be witnesses of the gospel of our Lord in every place, “for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifica-

tion of the body of Christ." Such are the views of Rothe,⁴¹ one of the latest writers on this subject, who has set forth his sentiments with great clearness, and supported them with unequalled learning and ability. Such also are the sentiments of Chrysostom, an ancient and learned bishop. "The apostles were constituted of God rulers, not over a separate nation or city, but all were entrusted with the world."⁴²

(b). Timothy at Ephesus was not a bishop.

Timothy was one of a class of religious teachers who acted as the assistants and fellow-laborers of the apostle. Their assistance was employed as a needful expedient to enable the apostles to exercise their supervision over the infant churches which sprang up in the different and distant countries through which Christianity was propagated by them. Over churches widely separated, the apostles could personally exercise but little supervision. Some of them, as the apostle Peter, and especially the great apostle of the Gentiles, were instrumental in planting many churches in distant countries. He saw the necessity of employing suitable and competent men, who, invested with his authority, and in his name, might supply his lack of service to those churches which lay beyond the range of his immediate inspection. They were neither permanent officers in the church, nor restricted to any specific circuit, but temporary residents, to assist in setting in order the churches, and giving needful instruction, as the occasion might require, and then to pass away to some other station, wherever their services might be required.

Such assistants and delegates of the apostles are of frequent occurrence in the Scriptures. And this view of

⁴¹ Anfänge, Christ. Kirch., pp. 297—310.

⁴² Ἐισὶν ὑπο θεοῦ χειροτονηθέντες ἀπόστολοι ἄρχοντες, οὐκ ἔθνη καὶ πόλεις διάφορους λαμβάνοντες, ἀλλὰ πάντες κοινῇ τὴν δικουμένην ἐμπιστεύθεντας.—Cited by Campbell, Lectures, p. 77.

their office affords, at once, a natural and easy explanation of the peculiar and somewhat anomalous rank which they seem to hold. Bishops they certainly were not, in the Episcopal sense of that term.⁴³ Neither were they merely presbyters; for, though in many things their office was analogous to that of presbyters, in other respects it was widely different. Such was Timothy, whom Paul styles his fellow-laborer, *συνεργός*. Rom. 16: 21. 1 Thess. 3: 2. In the salutations of his epistles, also, he often couples the name of Timothy with his own. Phil. 1: 1. 1 Thess. 1: 1. 2 Thess. 1: 1, &c. Accordingly, Timothy appears as the travelling companion of the apostle.

He seems, indeed, at different times, to have had the superintendence of several churches in various places. Comp. 1 Cor. 4: 17, 1 Tim. 1: 3, and 1 Thess. 3: 2, from which it appears that he was sent to Corinth, to Ephesus, and to Thessalonica, as a fellow-laborer and assistant of the apostle. From what is said of his influence at Corinth, it would seem that he might with almost equal propriety be styled the bishop of that city as of Ephesus. In the first epistle, he is reputed to have been sent to them, as the representative of the apostle, to bring them into remembrance of his ways and doctrines; and, in the second, he unites with Paul as his brother in the salutation of that church. The whole history of the Acts of the Apostles, and indeed the language of the epistles proves that, like the other of St. Paul's fellow-travellers, Timothy had no settled abode, no fixed station; but assisted him, as an evangelist, in setting the churches in order, and in the accomplishment of any special object which the apostle had in view, and to which he could not personally attend. The apostle, often coupling the name of Timothy with his own, presents him to us as his travelling companion and

⁴³ Bishop Onderdonk only claims this distinction for Timothy, and many of that communion give up this point.

assistant. This itinerating life of Timothy sufficiently proves that he was not the bishop of Ephesus. When both the epistles to the Thessalonians were written, A. D. 62, Timothy was with Paul at Corinth, having lately returned from Thessalonica, where he had spent some time in ministering to that church.

When Paul wrote the first epistle to the Corinthians, A. D. 57, from Ephesus, Timothy was absent again, on a mission to Macedonia and Achaia, from whence he was expected soon to be there. 1 Cor. 16: 10. Titus also goes about this time on a mission to Corinth.

The year following, when Paul wrote his second epistle from Macedonia, Timothy was with him there, and Titus, whom Paul had met in Macedonia, was again one of the messengers by whom the letter was forwarded to that church.

Some months later, A. D. 58, when he wrote his epistle to the Romans from Corinth, Timothy was with him there.

The epistle to the Ephesians was written from Rome, A. D. 61, subsequent to the time when Timothy is alleged to have been made bishop of Ephesus; yet he is not named in it, nor is there any allusion in it to any head of the church there, but only to "the saints and faithful brethren." Indeed, it is certain, from the epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon, written about the same time from Rome, that Timothy was, at this time, in that city; so that he could scarcely have been in his supposed diocese at all.

"The expression in 1 Tim. 1: 3, 'As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus when I went into Macedonia,' seems to mark but a temporary purpose, and to bear little similitude to a settled appointment and establishment of him as head of the church there, *i. e.*, bishop, in the modern acceptation of the term, resembling rather his previous mission to Thessalonica, referred to in the epistle to the Thessalo-

nians (3 : 2); and this is confirmed by the undoubted fact, that when the second epistle to him was written, not only was Timothy not in his supposed diocese at Ephesus, but the apostle tells him that he had sent Tychicus there, who is spoken of by the apostle as being in like manner a fellow-servant, beloved brother, and fellow-minister of the Lord (Ephes. 6 : 21), as Timothy himself was. This we know to have been shortly before the death of the apostle."⁴² The absurdity of supposing that this request was made to Timothy as bishop, is forcibly presented by Daillé. "Why beseech a bishop to remain in his diocese? Is it not to beseech a man to stay in a place to which he is bound? I should not think it strange to beseech him to leave it, if his services were needed elsewhere. But to beseech him to abide in a place where his charge obliges him to be, and which he cannot forsake without offending God and neglecting his duty, is, to say the truth, not a very civil entreaty; as it plainly pre-supposes that he has not his duty much at heart, seeing one is under the necessity of beseeching him to do it."⁴³

By the imposition of hands he was endowed with peculiar gifts, that qualified him to serve the churches as a fellow-laborer with the apostle, who accordingly charges him not to neglect this gift.⁴⁴

But what need of many words on this subject? The apostle, just before his death, and long after he is supposed to have settled Timothy as bishop at Ephesus, gives him his true designation,—an evangelist, "Do the work," not of bishop, but "of an evangelist." The work which he was

⁴² Bowdler's Letters on Apost. Succession, pp. 25, 26.

⁴³ Daillé, *ci-dessus*, p. 23. Cited in Mason's Works, Vol. III, p. 197.

⁴⁴ Comp. Neander, *Apost. Kirch.*, 1, c. 10. Rothe, *Anfänge*, Vol. I, pp. 160, 161, and 263; also, J. H. Böhrer, *Diss. Jur. Eccl. Antiq.*, p. 424, seq., where is given an able discussion of the points under consideration, in relation to Timothy, Titus, and the angel of the churches. Barnes's *Apost. Church*, pp. 99—107, and Smyth's *Presbytery and Prelacy*, chap. 12, § 3.

exhorted to do was simply that of a "person who, being attached to no particular church, was sent by the apostle as was necessary, either for the purpose of founding new churches, or of confirming those which were already established." ⁴⁵

(c) Titus was not bishop of Crete.

Like Timothy, Titus was an evangelist. He received similar instructions and performed similar labors. Like Timothy, he also travelled too much for a stationary prelate. From Syria we trace him to Jerusalem; thence to Corinth; thence to Macedonia; back again to Corinth; thence to Crete; thence to Dalmatia; and whether he ever returned to Crete is wholly uncertain. He was left at Crete, therefore, not as bishop of that diocese, but as an assistant of the apostle, to establish the churches, and to continue the work which the apostle had begun. "After Paul had laid the foundation of the Christian church in Crete," says Neander, "he left Titus behind, to complete the organization of the churches; to confirm the new converts in purity of doctrine, and to counterwork the influence of the false teachers." ⁴⁶

From all this there appears to be no scriptural foundation for considering either Timothy, established as bishop of Ephesus, or Titus, of Crete. Dr. Whitby, himself a zealous advocate of Episcopacy, assures us that he could find *nothing in any writer of the first three centuries concerning the Episcopate of Timothy and Titus; nor any intimation that they bore that name.* "Certain it is," says Campbell, also, "that in the first three centuries, neither Timothy nor Titus is styled bishop by any writer." He journeyed much with Paul, and was left in Crete, like Timothy at Ephesus, to render, in behalf of the apostles, a similar service to the churches on that island.

⁴⁵ Beausobre, quoted by Mant and d'Ogley, on Acts 21: 8.

⁴⁶ Apost. Kirch., 1, p. 405.

Of the same general character, also, was Silvanus, 1 Thess. 1: 1. 2 Thess. 1: 1. Comp. 1 Pet. 5: 12; and Mark, Col. 4: 10. 1 Pet. 5: 13; and Clemens, Phil. 4: 3, and several others. Silas is first the travelling companion of Paul and Barnabas in Asia Minor; then of Paul, in his second missionary tour through Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Achaia; and, at a later period, the companion of Peter in the Parthian empire. Mark, also, was first the companion of Paul and Barnabas; then, after their separation, of Barnabas in Cyprus; and afterwards of Peter in the Parthian empire; and from thence he accompanied him to Rome.

No one of the apostles, therefore, nor Timothy, nor Titus, nor any of the evangelists, acted in the capacity of bishop of any church or diocese. In neither has this higher grade any representation; nor has the prelatical doctrine of Episcopal supremacy and apostolical succession the least foundation in Scripture.⁴⁷

(d) The angel of the church in the apocalyptic epistles was not a bishop.

On this subject, we shall present the reader with the exposition of several distinguished scholars, and submit it to him, whether this phraseology supports the prelatical claims of Episcopacy. The views of Neander are briefly given in his Introduction.⁴⁸

By the kindness of Prof. Stuart, we here offer the following exposition from his unpublished commentary on Revelation:

"The seven angels have given occasion to much speculation and diversity of opinion. Are they *teachers, bishops, overseers*? or is some other office designated by the word *ἄγγελος*, angel, here?

"1. Old Testament usage; viz., the later Hebrew employ s the word *מַלְאָךְ*=*ἄγγελος*, to designate a prophet. Hag. 1: 13, also a priest. Mal. 2: 7, and Ecc. 5: 6. As priests, in

⁴⁷ Comp. Rothe, *Anfänge*, 1, p. 305, seq.

⁴⁸ Page 21.

the appropriate sense of the word, did not exist in the Christian churches (for they had no Mosaic ritual of sacrifices and oblations), so we must compare ἄγγελος here with נָבִיא, prophet, in Hag. 1: 13. Προφῆται, prophets, there were in the Christian church. See 1 Cor. 12: 28. Acts 13: 1. 1 Cor. 14: 29, 32, 37. Eph. 2: 20. 3: 5. 4: 11. Taken in this sense, the word designates here the leading teacher in the Asiatic churches. The nature of the case would seem to indicate a *leader* here, else why should he be especially addressed as the representative of the whole body in each of the Christian churches? But,

"2. Another exposition has been given. Vitringa⁴⁹ has compared the ἄγγελος of the apocalypse with the שְׁלִיחַ צַבָּר of the Jewish synagogues, which means *legatus ecclesiae* [*the representative or delegate of the church*], and compares well with ἄγγελος ἐκκλησίας [*angel of the church*], as to the form of the phrase. The office of the individual thus named was to superintend and conduct the worship of the synagogue; *i. e.*, he recited prayers, and read the Scriptures, or invited others to perform these duties; he called on the priests to pronounce the final benediction, in case he himself was not a priest; he proclaimed the sacred feasts, and, in a word, he superintended the whole concerns of religious worship, and evidently took the lead in them himself. He was a προεστώς, or an ἐπισκοπος [*a superintendent or overseer*], and also a διδάσκαλος, *teacher*, in a greater or less degree. Comp. John 3: 10. The best account of his office is in Schoettgen, *Horae Heb.*, p. 1089, seq., who has pointed out some errors and deficiencies of Vitringa. The nature of the case shows that the superior officer is, in this instance, and should be, addressed. He is probably called the angel of the church, in conformity to

⁴⁹ De Vet. Synagoga., p. 910, seq. As an interpretation of the Hebrew phrase, שְׁלִיחַ צַבָּר, the English reader may read, as often as it occurs, *the ruler of the synagogue*.

the Hebrew Chaldee שְׁלִיחַ צְבוּר (possibly in reference to Hag. 1: 13, or Mal. 2: 7), and may be called *legatus ecclesiae*, because he is *delegatus ab ecclesia* [delegated by the church], in order that he may render their public devotions to God, and superintend their social worship. Exactly the limits of the office and its specific duties neither the word, ἄγγελος, explains, nor does the context give us any particular information."

The learned Origen affirms, that the angels of the churches were the προεστώτες, the presiding presbyters, the same of whom Justin, Tertullian, and Clemens Alexandrinus speak, in the extracts which are given below, in their order.⁵⁰

The exposition given below is from the learned Dr. Delitzsh, of Leipsic, the associate of Dr. Fürst, in preparing his Hebrew Concordance. The writer himself is a man of profound erudition in all that relates to Hebrew and Rabbinical literature, who, by our particular desire, furnished the article for us in a late visit to that city.

"The ἄγγελοι τῆς ἐκκλησίας, *angels of the churches*, are the bishops; or, what in my opinion is the same in the apostolical churches, the presbyters of the churches. The expression, like many others in the New Testament, is derived from the synagogue, which may be regarded as the parent source of the Christian church, having remained essentially unchanged for a long time after the overthrow of the temple service. The office of the שְׁלִיחַ צְבוּר corresponds entirely with that of bishop or presbyter of the apostolical churches.

"1. The שְׁלִיחַ צְבוּר bears this name as the *delegatus ecclesiae*, the delegate of the church, who was elected by them to exercise and enjoy the privileges and prerogatives of a presiding officer in their assemblies. It was his duty

⁵⁰ Προεστῶτας τινὰς τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν ἀγγέλους λέγεσθαι παρὰ τῷ Ἰωαννῇ ἐν τῇ ἀποκαταλόγῳ.—*De Orat.*, § 34.

to pray in the name of the assembly, to lead in the reading of the Scriptures, to blow the trumpet, the שופר on the opening of a new year; and, in the absence of those who belonged to the priesthood, the כהנים, to pronounce the Aaronitic benediction. So far as the performance of this rite is concerned, the priests themselves are the שליחי צבור. The original passages are given by Schoettgen.⁵¹ So high and important was the office of this שליח צבור, and so nearly did it correspond with that of bishop or presbyter, that the name of the former might be applied to the latter.

"The signification of the term may also be learned from the Aramaean term, the קריבא. This officer of the synagogue, the שליח צבור, was regarded as bringing before God the prayers of the people, which were considered as their spiritual offering. It appears from the Jerusalem Talmud, that when one was invited to ascend the pulpit to offer public prayers, the language of the invitation was, not 'Come and pray,' but 'Come hither, and present our offering,' עשה קרבנינו.⁵²

"The office of the שליח צבור did not, indeed, include the duty of a public teacher; for the office of public preaching was not established as a permanent institution, but had its origin within the period of the Christian dispensation.

"I have thus shown that the appellation, *angel of the church*, was used to designate the presiding officer of the Christian church, with particular reference to the שליח צבור of the synagogue. Still, as a name of an office, the angel of the church may have a meaning somewhat higher. Such a meaning it may have, with reference, retrospectively, to the מלאך יהוה of the Old Testament.⁵³ So that the angel of the church may, at the same time, denote the

⁵¹ Horae Hebraicae et Talmudicae ad Apoc., 1, p. 1089, seq.

⁵² Berachot, c. 4, f. 206. Comp. Zunz, Die gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden.

⁵³ Comp. Malachi 2: 7, and Haggai 1: 13.

bishop or presbyter chosen by this Christian community, to be the messenger, or servant, both of God and of the church. This call of the church is itself a *vocatio divina*, a *divine calling*; and, according to the New Testament view of the subject, unites the idea of both offices in the same person."

Bengel, also, the most learned expositor of the book of Revelation, is of opinion, that the angel of the church corresponds to the של"יח צבור of the synagogue. "The Hebrews had, in their synagogue, a של"יח צבור, a *deputatum ecclesiae*, who, in reading, in prayer, &c., led the congregation; and such a leader, also, had each of the seven churches of the Apocalypse." ⁵⁴

The result is, that the angel of the churches, whatever view we take of the origin of the term, was not the representative of an order or grade superior to presbyters, but himself merely a presbyter; or, if you please,—a *bishop*, provided you mean by it simply what the Scriptures always mean,—a pastor of a church, the ordinary and only minister, divinely constituted to be the shepherd and bishop of their souls.

II. It remains to consider the historical argument for the original equality and identity of bishops and presbyters.

The doctrine of the original equality and identity of bishops and presbyters was fully recognized in the early church, and continued to be acknowledged, even after the establishment of the hierarchy, down to the time of the Reformation. The historical argument comprised in this proposition may be resolved into several particulars, each of which serves to show that both the early fathers and later historians regarded presbyters and bishops as belong-

⁵⁴ Erklärung Offenbarung, p. 216. For a further illustration of the opinions of the learned, the reader is referred to Campbell's Lectures on Eccl. Hist., pp. 82—83. Whately, Kingdom of Christ, pp. 246—250.

ing to the same grade or order of the clergy, and equal in their rights and privileges.

1. Presbyters are designated by names and titles similar to those of bishops.

2. Presbyters, like bishops, are carefully distinguished from the deacons, the *second order* of the clergy, in such a manner as to show that they are indiscriminately and equally the representatives of the first order.

3. Presbyters were understood to possess the right to ordain; and, generally, to perform the functions of the Episcopal office.

4. Bishops, themselves, in their ministerial character, exercised only the jurisdiction, and performed merely the offices, of presbyters in the primitive churches.

5. The original equality of bishops and presbyters continued to be acknowledged, from the rise of the Episcopal hierarchy down to the time of the Reformation.

1. Presbyters are designated in the writings of the early fathers by names and titles similar to those of bishops.

When from the Scriptures we turn to the writings of these fathers, it is observable that they speak sometimes of bishops and sometimes of presbyters as the presiding officers of the church, and then again of both indiscriminately, as being one and the same in rank. To both they ascribe the same or similar names and titles, such as seniors, elders, chairmen, moderators, presidents, &c., all indicating a similarity and identity of office, and an equality of rank. Even when the first place is assigned to the bishop, he is only chief among equals, just as in a modern presbytery or association, one is promoted to the office of moderator, to which all are alike eligible.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ We have brought together in parallel columns some of the names and titles which are ascribed to bishops and presbyters severally. The

2. Presbyters, like bishops, are carefully distinguished from the deacons, the second order of the clergy, in such a manner as to show that they are indiscriminately and equally the representatives of the first order.

Several of the earliest fathers distinctly recognize but two orders of the priesthood. They of the first order are sometimes denominated presbyters, sometimes bishops, and then again bishops and presbyters indiscriminately. It is worthy of particular notice, that while bishops and presby-

intelligent reader will readily perceive the similarity of the titles given to both, and the identity of their significations.

TITLES OF BISHOPS.

Ἐπίσκοποι, πρεσβύτεροι, πρόεδροι, προϊστάμενοι, ἑφοροὶ ἀρχοντες ἐκκλησιῶν, προεσιῶ-
τες.

Praesides, praepositi; praesidentes, superattendentes, superintendentes, pastores, patres ecclesiae, vicarii, praesules, antistes, antistes sacrorum, seniores, &c.

TITLES OF PRESBYTERS.

Ἐπίσκοποι,¹ πρεσβύτεροι,² πρόεδροι,³ προεσιῶτες,⁴ προσ-
τάται.⁵

Praepositi, antistes, majores natu, seniores, seniores plebis, sacerdotes, &c.

These and several other titles are given in our Antiquities, pp. 70, 94. Riddle, *Christ. Antiq.*, pp. 161, 229. Baumgarten, *Erläuterungen*, pp. 75, 94. Rheinwald, pp. 30, 45.

Obviously these titles severally are synonymous, and are applied indiscriminately to both bishops and presbyters, to denote one and the same office. Riddle, *Christ. Antiq.*, p. 230. Blondell very justly remarks, that "the use of such terms creates no difficulty, and for the reason that, even after a distinction was made between bishops and presbyters in the second century by the decision of the churches, both continued to be distinguished indiscriminately by the same appellation."—*Apologia pro Hieron.*, p. 92.

Riddle also allows "that the terms, ἐπίσκοπος and πρεσβύτερος, in the New Testament are synonymous, and denote one and the same office;" and cites several passages, to some of which reference is made above.

¹ Chrysost., Hom. 1, in Phil. 1, p. 8. Hom. 2, in 1 Tim. 3. Theodoret, in Phil. 1: 1. 2: 25. Jerome, ad Tit. 1, and Ep. 83, 85.

² Greg. Naz., Orat. 1. Basil, Reg. Morali, 71.

³ Synesius Ep., 12.

⁴ Greg. Naz., Orat. 1. Basil, M. Regula Morali.

⁵ Chrysost., Hom. 11, in 1 Tim. 4. Comp. Rom. 12: 8.

ters are confounded one with another, they are uniformly distinguished from the deacons, the second order of the priesthood. Whatever be the title by which the clergy of the first order is called, you are in no danger of mistaking them for the second.

Clement of Rome, who wrote about A. D. 96, is our first authority. His epistle addressed to the Corinthians, is the earliest and most authentic of all the writings of the apostolical fathers. It was held in such esteem by the early Christians, that it was publicly read in their religious assemblies, in the same manner as the apostolical epistles.⁵⁶ And, by ecclesiastical writers generally, nothing that is not divine is admitted to be of higher authority. This revered father recognizes but *two orders* of the priesthood, *bishops* and *deacons*, ἐπισκοπὸς καὶ διακόνος. It gives not the least intimation of an individual bishop at Corinth, uniformly speaking of the presbyters of that church whom the Corinthians had rejected, as belonging to the highest order. "The apostles preaching in countries and cities, appointed the first fruits of their labors to be *bishops* and *deacons*, having proved them by the Spirit."⁵⁷ These are the two orders of the ministry, as originally appointed by the apostles. "It were a grievous sin," he proceeds to say, "to reject those who have faithfully fulfilled the duties of their *Episcopal office*, and immediately adds, "blessed are those *presbyters*, who have finished their course and entered upon their reward,"⁵⁸ i. e., blessed are those *presbyters* who have thus faithfully performed the duties of

⁵⁶ Euseb., Eccl. Hist., Lib. 3, c. 13.

⁵⁷ Κατὰ χώρας ἔν καὶ πόλεις κηρύσσοντες καθίστανον τὰς ἀπαρχὰς αὐτῶν, δοκιμάσαντες τῷ πνεύματι, εἰς ἐπισκόπους καὶ διακόνους τῶν μελλόντων πιβεύειν.—*Epist. ad Cor.*, § 42, p. 57.

⁵⁸ Ἀμαρτία γὰρ ἡ μικρὰ ἡμῖν ἔσται, ἰάν τὸς ἀμέμπτως καὶ δόσως προσενέγκοντας τὰ δῶρα τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς ἀποβάλωμεν. Μακάριοι οἱ προοδοιπορήσαντες πρεσβύτεροι, οἵτινες ἔκκαρπον καὶ τέλεσαν ἔσχον τὴν ἀνάλυσιν.—*Epist. ad Cor.*, § 44, p. 58.

their Episcopal office; bishops and presbyters being used interchangeably as descriptive of the same order. This passage establishes the identity of bishops and presbyters in the opinion of this venerable author, who may be understood to express the prevailing opinion both at Rome and at Corinth. The epistle proceeds on the evident assumption, that the ministerial office, and the relations between pastor and people, were the same in both. He is remonstrating with the Corinthians for expelling certain presbyters from their *bishopric*, ἀπο τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς. "Clement himself," says Riddle, "was not even aware of the distinction between bishops and presbyters—terms which in fact he uses as synonymous."⁵⁹

Polycarp is our next witness. This father was familiar with those who had seen our Lord. He was the disciple of John the apostle, and is supposed by many to be the angel of the church at Smyrna, in Rev. 2: 8. Such was the respect in which the epistle was held by the primitive Christians, that it was publicly read in their churches until the fourth century. This valuable relic of antiquity, the date of which is usually assigned to the year 140, harmonizes in a remarkable degree with that of Clement, in recognizing but two orders of the clergy.⁶⁰ The first it denominates *presbyters*. Bishops are not once named in all the epistle. These presbyters are represented to have been the inspectors and rulers of the church, to administer discipline, and to exercise the functions of the highest officer of the church. Nor is there the least intimation that any one has authority superior to these.

As the author of the epistle, and apparently the presiding elder, the προεστώς of the church, he opens the letter with

⁵⁹ Christ. Antiq., p. 5. Comp. Waddington's Church Hist., p. 35. Campbell's Lectures, p. 72.

⁶⁰ Διὸ δεόν ἀπέχεσθαι ἀπὸ πάντων τούτων ὑποτασσόμενους τοῖς πρεσβυτέροις καὶ διακόνοις ὡς Θεῷ καὶ Χριστῷ.—*Ad. Phil.*, c. 6.

the usual Christian salutation to the church whom he addresses, coupled with that of his fellow-presbyters. "Polycarp and the *presbyters* with him, to the church of God dwelling at Philippi, mercy to you, and peace be multiplied from God Almighty, and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour." Paul in his salutation addresses the *bishops* and deacons of this church. Polycarp in his, speaks only of *presbyters* and deacons. If there were three orders of clergy at Philippi, the omission of one by the apostle, and another by this apostolical father is unaccountable. The advice of Polycarp to the church "to be subject to the *presbyters* and *deacons*," becomes particularly irrelevant and improper, on the supposition, that the government of the church was vested in a *bishop*. The conclusion, therefore, is inevitable, that bishop and presbyter are still used interchangeably, and both Paul and Polycarp speak of the same class of persons. Clement and Polycarp were contemporaries, and survivors of the apostles. They resided the one at Rome, the other in Asia Minor, and represent different bodies of the Christian church, remote from each other, and widely different in language, in government, and in national peculiarities. The ecclesiastical polity of these four churches may fairly be assumed as an example of the usage of others at this time.

From all that we can gather from their writings, no office existed in the churches either of Rome, Corinth, Smyrna, or Philippi, superior to that of presbyter; nor is there any indication of diversity of order, degree, ordination, or power, between the several presbyters or bishops of those churches; save that of senior or moderator, the *πρεσβυτέρως* of their body.

It is also particularly noticeable, that Polycarp specifies the qualifications necessary both for deacons,⁶¹ and for presbyters;⁶² and, like Paul, the apostle, on a similar

⁶¹ Ep., c. 5.

⁶² Ep., c. 6.

occasion, Tit. 1: 5—9, makes no mention of what is proper in the conduct and character of a bishop.

Justin Martyr, the Christian philosopher, who suffered martyrdom A. D. 165, two years before Polycarp, offers further confirmation of these views of the subject. Never himself holding any clerical office, his relations to the church, his learning, his candor, his piety, and his death, all concur to render him an unexceptionable witness. In his description of public worship, after mentioning prayers and the fraternal salutation, he says,—“There is brought to him who presides over the brethren, τῷ προεστώτι τῶν ἀδελφῶν, bread and a cup of water, and wine, and he taking *them* offers up praise and glory to the Father of the universe, through the name of the Son and the Holy Ghost, and renders thanks for these, his gifts. At the close of his petition and thanksgivings, all the people present say Amen; which, in the Hebrew language, signifies *may it be so*. And he who presides, having given thanks, and the whole assembly having expressed their assent, they who are called among us deacons, διάκονοι, distribute the bread, and the wine, and water to each of those who are present, to partake of that which has been blessed. Also they carry to those who are not present.”⁶³

His testimony, in the passage above cited, is that two

⁶³ Ἀδελφοὶ κοινὰς εὐχὰς ποιησόμενοι ὑπὲρ τῶν αὐτῶν καὶ τοῦ φωτισθέντος καὶ ἄλλων πανταχοῦ πάντων εὐτόνως. — ἀλλήλους φιλήματι ἀσπαζόμεθα παυσάμενοι τῶν εὐχῶν. ἔπειτα προσφέρεται τῷ προεστώτι τῶν ἀδελφῶν ἄρτος καὶ ποιτήριον ὕδατος καὶ κράματος, καὶ οὗτος λαβὼν, αἶνον καὶ δόξαν τῷ πατρὶ τῶν ὄλων, διὰ τοῦ ὀνόματος τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ ἁγίου, ἀναπέμψει καὶ εὐχαριστίαν ὑπὲρ τοῦ κατηξιῶσθαι τούτων παρ’ αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ πολὺ ποιεῖται. οὐ συντελέσαντος τὰς εὐχὰς καὶ τὴν εὐχαριστίαν, πᾶς ὁ παρὼν λαὸς ἐπευφημεῖ λέγων, Ἀμήν. — εὐχαριστήσαντος δὲ τοῦ προεστώτος, καὶ ἐπευφημήσαντος παντὸς τοῦ λαοῦ, οἱ ἀλούμενοι παρ’ ἡμῶν διάκονοι, διδόνασιν ἐκάστω τῶν παρόντων μεταλαβεῖν. — *Apol.*, 1, c. 65, p. 82.

orders only officiated in their public worship and in their celebration of the eucharist. Soon after this, he again describes their mode of public worship, and of communion, and specifies the same officiating officers, the *president* of the brethren, and the *deacons*.⁶⁴ Nothing occurs, either in the narrative, or in the distinctive epithet, to indicate any higher order or office than that of the officiating presbyter who conducted their worship and administered the sacrament; or if you call him bishop, he is still of the same order, distinguished clearly from the deacons, but differing in no wise from the order of presbyters.

Upon the import of this *προεστώς*, of Justin, about which so much is said, the following remarks of Milton are worthy of particular consideration:—"Now for the word *προεστώς*, it is more likely that Timothy never knew the word in that sense. It was the vanity of those next succeeding times not to content themselves with the simplicity of Scripture phrase, but must make a new lexicon to name themselves by; one will be called *προεστώς*, or antistes, a word of precedence; another would be termed a gnostic, as Clemens; a third, sacerdos, or priest, and talks of altars; which was a plain sign that their doctrine began to change, for which they must change their expressions. But that place of Justin Martyr serves rather to convince the author, than to make for him, where the name *προεστώς τῶν ἀδελφῶν*, the president or pastor of the brethren (for to what end is he their president but to teach them?) cannot be limited to signify a prelatical bishop, but rather communicates that Greek appellation to every ordinary presbyter; for there he tells what the Christians had wont to do in their several congregations, to read and expound, to pray and administer, all which he says the *προεστώς*, or antistes, did. Are these the offices only of a bishop, or shall we think that every congregation where these things were done, which he attri-

⁶⁴ Apol., 1, c. 67, p. 83.

butes to this 'antistes,' had a bishop present among them? unless they had as many 'antistites' as presbyters, which this place rather seems to imply; and so we may infer even from their own alleged authority, 'that *antistes* was nothing else but presbyter.'"⁶⁵

Having now passed the middle of the second century, and found only two orders in the church, we may fairly conclude that such was the organization adopted by the apostles. This early and uniform usage is a fair construction of their authority and example. But the evidence already adduced is corroborated by other authorities.

Irenaeus, a Greek, of Asia Minor, was in his youth a hearer of the venerable Polycarp, the disciple of John. He spent his advanced life in Gaul, at Lyons, and died about the commencement of the third century, probably A. D. 202. Speaking of Marcion, Valentinus, Cerinthus, and other heretics, he says:—"When we refer them to that apostolic tradition, which is preserved in the churches, through the succession of their *presbyters*, these men oppose the tradition; pretending that, being more wise than, not only the *presbyters*, but the apostles themselves, they have found the uncorrupted truth."⁶⁶ Continuing the same course of reasoning, the author, in the next section, again styles these same presbyters, *bishops*. "We can enumerate those who were constituted by the apostles, *bishops* in the churches; their successors, also, even down to our time.—But because it would be tedious, in such a volume as this, to enumerate the successions in all the churches, showing to you the tradition and declared faith of the greatest and most ancient and noted church, founded at Rome by the

⁶⁵ Milton's Prelatical Episcopacy, Prose Works, Vol. I, p. 76.

⁶⁶ Cum autem ad eam iterum traditionem, quae est ab Apostolis, quae per successiones *Presbyterorum* in ecclesiis custoditur, provocamus eos: adversantur traditioni, dicentes, se non solum *Presbyteris*, sed etiam *Apostolis* existentes sapientiores, sinceram invenisse veritatem.—*Irenaeus, Adv. Haer.*, L. 3, c. 2, § 2, p. 175.

two glorious apostles, Peter and Paul, which she received from the apostles, and is come to us through the successions of the bishops, we confound all who conclude otherwise than they ought, by what means soever they do so."⁶⁷

But the very same traditions and successions, which are here ascribed to the bishops, are just above assigned also to presbyters.

Again, treating of the churches of Smyrna and Ephesus, he speaks in a similar connection, of Polycarp, as a *bishop*; but in another place, he styles him that *blessed and apostolical presbyter*, ἐπίσκοπος ὁ μακάριος καὶ ἀποστολικὸς πρεσβύτερος.⁶⁸

Again, "We ought to obey those *presbyters* in the church, who have succession, as we have shown, from the apostles; who, with the succession of the *Episcopate*, received the certain gift of truth, according to the good pleasure of the Father."⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Traditionem itaque Apostolorum in toto mundo manifestatam in omni ecclesia adest respicere omnibus, qui vera velint videre; et habemus annumerare eos, qui ab Apostolis instituti sunt *Episcopi* in ecclesiis, et successores eorum usque ad nos, qui nihil tale docuerunt, neque cognoverunt, quale ab his deliratur.—Sed quoniam valde longum est in hoc tali volumine, omnium ecclesiarum enumerare successiones, maximas et antiquissimas et omnibus cognitae, a gloriosissimis duobus Apostolis Petro et Paulo Romae fundatae et constitutae ecclesiae eam, quam habet ab Apostolis traditionem et annuntiatam hominibus fidem, per successiones *Episcoporum* pervenientem usque ad nos indicantes, confundimus omnes, etc.—*Irenaeus*, c. 3, § 1, p. 175, et § 2, ibid.

⁶⁸ Euseb., Eccl. Hist., Lib. 5, c. 20.

⁶⁹ Quapropter eis, qui in ecclesiis sunt, *Presbyteris* obaudire oportet, his, qui successionem habent ab Apostolis, sicut ostendimus; qui cum *Episcopatus* successione charisma veritatis certum secundum placitam Patris acceperunt, etc. After this,—Qui vero crediti quidem sunt a multis esse *Presbyteri*, serviunt autem suis voluptatibus, et non praeponunt timorem Dei in cordibus suis, sed contumeliis agunt reliquos, et *principalis consecrationis* tumore elati sunt et in absconsis agunt mala, et dicunt, *nemo nos videt*, redarguentur a verbo, etc. Further on,—Ab omnibus igitur talibus abstinere oportet, adherere vero his, qui et Apostolorum, sicut praediximus, doctrinam custodiunt, et cum *Presbyteris* ordine sermonem sanam et conversationem sine offensa praestant, ad confirmationem et correptionem

"And truly, they who by many are regarded as *presbyters*, but serve their own pleasures, and, not having the fear of God in their hearts, but elated with the pride of their exaltation to the chief seat, commit wickedness in secret, saying, no one seeth us—they shall be convicted.—From all such we ought to withdraw, and, as we have said, to adhere to those who maintain the doctrine of the apostles, and who, with the order of the *presbytership* or of a *presbyter*, preserve sound doctrine and a blameless conversation for the confirmation and reproof of others."

Again, he says, that they who cease to serve the church in the ministry, are a reproach to the sacred order of the *presbyters*; but he had just before styled these same persons *bishops*.⁷⁰

In his letter to the Roman bishop Victor, he speaks of the *presbyters*, who had presided over the church in that city before that *bishop*. One of these bishops, the predecessors of Victor was Anicetus, whom Polycarp endeavored in vain to persuade to "retain the usage of the *presbyters* who had preceded him."⁷¹

We submit the above extracts to the attention of the reader, who cannot fail to observe, that the terms, *bishop* and *presbyter*, are used by this ancient father, as perfectly convertible terms. Bishops he denominates presbyters; and presbyters, bishops. In so many words he ascribes the *Episcopate* to presbyters. They unitedly constitute but one order in the priesthood. Both Justin and Irenaeus

ceterorum. Finally, Τοιούτους Πρεσβυτέρους ἀνατρέψει ἡ ἐκκλησία, περὶ ὧν καὶ ὁ προφήτης φησιν· δώσω τοὺς ἄρχοντας σου ἐν σιγήνῃ καὶ τοὺς ἐπισκόπους ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ.—*Irenaeus*, L. 4, c. 26, § 2, 3, 4, p. 262, § 5, p. 263.

⁷⁰ Qui ergo relinquunt praeconium ecclesiae imperitiam sanctorum *presbyterorum* arguunt, non contemplantes quanto pluri sit idiota religiosus a blasphemo et impudente sophista, L. 5, c. 20, § 2. In the preceding section, he says, Omnes enim valde posteriores sunt quam *episcopi* quibus apostoli tradiderunt ecclesias. § 1.

⁷¹ Euseb., Eccl. Hist., Lib. 5, c. 24.

represent the churches of Asia Minor. The former also resided for many years in the Western part of the Roman empire. Their concurring testimony shows that both the Eastern and Western churches still retained the apostolical institution of two orders of the clergy.

We are not ignorant of the gloss that is given to these passages from Irenaeus, in the endeavor to defend the theory of an original distinction between bishops and presbyters. But the consideration of the Episcopal argument is foreign to our purpose. The authorities are before the reader; and of their obvious meaning, any one is competent to form an independent, unaided judgment.

Titus Flavius Clemens, commonly known as Clement of Alexandria, lived at the close of the second and beginning of the third century. He was at the head of the celebrated school at Alexandria, the preceptor of Origen, and the most learned man of his age. He speaks indeed of presbyters, bishops and deacons. After citing from the epistles various practical precepts, he proceeds to say that "numerous other precepts also, directed to select characters, have been written in the sacred books, some to *presbyters*, some to *bishops*, some to deacons, and others to widows."⁷² In this enumeration he appears to have followed the order of the apostle in Tit. 1: 5, 6, 7, mentioning presbyters first. He repeatedly shows, however, that there were but two orders, deacons and presbyters; having observed that in most things there are two sorts of ministry, the one of a nobler nature than the other, which is subservient; and having illustrated this distinction by several other examples, he says, "Just so in the church, the presbyters are entrusted with the dignified ministry; the deacons, with the subordinate."⁷³ He also speaks of a *προκαθεδρα*, or first

⁷² Paedag., Lib. 3, p. 264. Comp. also Strom., Lib. 6, p. 667.

⁷³ Ομοίως δὲ καὶ κατὰ τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, τὴν μὲν βελητιοτικὴν οἱ πρεσβύτεροι σώζουσιν, εἰκόνα τὴν ὑπερυκλὴν οἱ διάκονοι.—*Strom.*, Lib. 7, p. 700.

seat in the presbytery. From all which, the obvious inference is, that the bishop of this author is only the *προσβιτης* of earlier writers, the presiding elder of the presbytery. Henceforth the title of *προσβιτης* seldom occurs in the fathers, but instead of it that of *ἐπισκοπος*, *bishop*, constantly occurs.

In his treatise, "What rich man can be saved?" Clement relates that John, the apostle, observing a young man of singular beauty, was so struck with his appearance, that turning to the bishop that presided over all, he committed him to his care in the presence of the church. John, after repeating the charge, is said to have returned to Ephesus, and "*this presbyter*," taking home the young man that had been committed to his care, nourished, educated, and lost him. John himself, on his return, is represented to have addressed this same *presbyter* as a bishop, "O bishop, return to us your charge."⁷⁴ Here then Clement uses interchangeably the terms, bishop and presbyter, to designate the same person, and makes John address, as *bishop*, one who was, notwithstanding, a *presbyter*.

"In this author we find a presbytery and deacons only, which is as forcible an exclusion of a third order, whether superior or intermediate, as can be reasonably expected from a writer, who had no knowledge of a third."

The account of Tertullian again, contemporary with Clement, both having died the same year, A. D. 218, harmonizes in a remarkable manner with that of Justin Martyr, as above related. In describing the worship of Christian assemblies, he observes, "Certain approved elders preside who have obtained that honor, not by price, but by the evidence of their fitness."⁷⁵ Aged men never presided by virtue of their age, in ancient Christian assemblies. Be-

⁷⁴ Chap. 42, pp. 667, 669, Vol. 7, Sanct. Pat. Op. Polemica.

⁷⁵ Praesident probati quique seniores honorem istum non pretio, sed testimonio adepti; neque enim pretio ulla res Dei constat.—*Apol.*, c. 39.

sides, the passage distinctly asserts that these presidents were *chosen* to their office. They administered the sacrament and fulfilled the office of the *προεστώς* of Justin Martyr. "We never take from the hand of others than presidents, *praesidentium*, the sacrament of the eucharist," says Tertullian.⁷⁶ The president is also denominated in the same chapter, *antistes*, a term exactly corresponding to that of *προεστώς* in Justin. That this president, styled also bishop, is only the presiding and officiating presbyter, is sufficiently apparent from another passage in Tertullian. "The highest priest, who is the *bishop*, has the right of granting baptism; afterwards, the presbyters and deacons; not, however, without the authority of the bishops for the honor of the church."⁷⁷ The highest priest implies the existence of inferiors of the same grade. What then is the bishop, but a presbyter elevated to the office of a president or moderator? That this office implies no superiority in order or grade, appears from the fact that he was appointed to this office, not by any scriptural or apostolical ordination or appointment, but for the preservation of the honor and peace of the church.

Tertullian represents another division of the church in Africa, in which the Episcopal government was earliest developed; but even in these churches the apostolical order has not yet been fully superseded by the hierarchy. The sum of his testimony, and that of all who have gone before him is, that there is but one order of officers in the church superior to that of deacons. The government of the church was, at this time, in a transition state. Tertullian stood, as has been justly observed "on the boundary between two different epochs in the development of the church." The bishop begins to assume more prominence; but he has not yet be-

⁷⁶ De Corona, c. 3, p. 102.

⁷⁷ Dandi baptismum quidem habet jus summus sacerdos qui est episcopus Dehinc presbyteri et diaconi; non tamen sine episcopi auctoritate propter ecclesiae honorem.—*De Bapt.*, c. 17.

gun to be acknowledged as one of an order superior to presbyters. From the apostles downwards he has only been one among his fellow-presbyters, having merely the conventional distinction which any presiding officer may have who is appointed president of a body, all whose members are in the enjoyment of equal rights and privileges. Whatever apostolical succession there has been thus far, has been through a line of presbyters by presbyterian ordination. The lists which Irenaeus has given of primitive bishops are only catalogues of presbyters bearing this title. The usurpation of Episcopal prerogative, the assumption of divine right, and all the innovations which we are soon to witness in their general progress, are unauthorized, anti-scriptural, and consequently *mere nullities*; and such they must ever continue to be, notwithstanding the incredible assurance with which their canonical authority is asserted, and the ceaseless repetition of the assertion. General assertions are easily made; and, when made boldly and perpetually repeated, do sometimes by confident repetition ensure reception. But I know not how any man who knows what proof is, and what the proof is in the present case, can venture on such assumptions. What if Tertullian, Clement, Irenaeus and others, tell us of bishops? "It remains yet to be evinced out of this and the like places, which will never be, that the word bishop is otherwise taken, than in the language of St. Paul and the Acts, for an order above presbyters. We grant them bishops, we grant them worthy men, we grant them placed in several churches by the apostles, we grant that Irenaeus and Tertullian affirm this; but that they were placed in a superior order above the presbytery, show from all these words why we should grant. It is not enough to say that the apostle left this man bishop in Rome, and that other in Ephesus, but to show when they altered their own decree set down by St. Paul, and made all the presbyters underlings to one bishop."⁷⁸

⁷⁸ Milton's Prelatical Episcopacy, Prose Works, Vol. I, p. 85.

3. Presbyters were understood in the early ages of Christianity to possess the right to ordain, and generally to perform the functions of the Episcopal office.

The right of presbyters to ordain, and the validity of ordination administered by them, is a direct inference from what has already been said of their identity with bishops. Clement knows nothing of any distinction between bishops and presbyters. Polycarp knows nothing of bishops. Each specifies but two orders or grades of officers in the church, of whom deacons are one. Presbyters or bishops, of necessity form the other grade, and are one and the same. Justin Martyr again speaks of only two grades, of whom deacons are one. Irenaeus, still later, uses the titles, bishop and presbyter, as perfectly convertible terms; and Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian recognize no clear distinction between bishops and presbyters as different orders. If therefore there were, in the ages immediately succeeding the apostles, but two orders in the church, if bishops and presbyters are still but different names for the same office, as they were in the churches founded by the apostles, then assuredly presbyters had the right to ordain. The ordaining power was vested in them, as the highest order of ecclesiastical officers.

We have, however, direct authority in proof that presbyters, in the primitive church, did themselves ordain. This is found in the epistle of Firmilian from Asia Minor, to Cyprian in Carthage, A. D. 256. In explanation of the ecclesiastical polity of these churches, he says, "All power and grace is vested in the church, where the *presbyters*, *majores natu*, preside, who have authority to baptize, to impose hands [in the reconciling of penitents], and to ordain."⁷⁹ Firmilian wrote in the Greek language, from

⁷⁹ Omnis potestas et gratia in ecclesia constituta sit; ubi praesident *majores natu*, qui et baptizandi, et manum imponendi, et ordinandi, possident, potestatem.—*Cyprian, Epist.* 75, p. 145.

Asia; but we have a Latin translation of his epistle in the writings of Cyprian. No one who has any acquaintance with these languages, can doubt that the *majores natu* of the Latin is a translation of *πρεσβύτεροι*, in the original. Both the terms, *πρεσβύτεροι* and *majores natu*, mean the same thing; and each may, with equal propriety, be rendered *aged men*, *elders*, *presbyters*.⁸⁰ The Episcopal hierarchy was not fully established in these Eastern churches so early as in the Western. Accordingly, we find the presbyters here in the full enjoyment still of their original right to ordain. The general tenor of the letter, in connection with this passage, exhibits the popular government of the apostolical churches as yet in exercise in the churches of Asia. The highest authority is vested in the church, who still administer their own government. No restrictions have yet been laid upon the presbyters in the administration of the ordinances. Whatever clerical grace is essential for the right administration of baptism, of consecration, and of ordination, is still retained by the presbyters.

This authority is in perfect harmony with that of Irenaeus given above, that the succession and the *Episcopate* had come down to his day, the latter end of the second century, through a series of presbyters, who, with the Episcopate, enjoyed the rights, and exercised the prerogatives, of bishops, ordination being of course included. "This pas-

⁸⁰ Reeves, the translator of Justin, a churchman, who loses no opportunity of opposing sectarians, allows in his notes on the passage, *πρωεστώς*, &c., that this *πρωεστώς* of Justin, the *probati seniores* of Tertullian, the *majores natu* of Firmilian, and the *πρωεστῶτες πρεσβύτεροι*, or presiding presbyters of St. Paul, 1 Tim. 4: 17, were all one and the same. Now Tertullian, Cyprian, or Firmilian, the celebrated bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia, and St. Paul, all mean presbyters. Their language cannot be otherwise interpreted without violence. Presbyter, says Bishop Jewell, is expounded in Latin by *major natu*.—*Smyth's Presbyt. and Prelacy*, p. 367.



sage," says Goode, "appears to me decisive as to Irenæus's view of the matter." ⁸¹

To the foregoing testimonies succeeds that of the author of the Commentaries on St. Paul's Epistles, attributed to Ambrose, but with greater probability assigned to Hilary the Deacon, A. D. 384. "The apostle calls Timothy, created by him a *presbyter*,⁸² a bishop (for the first presbyters were called bishops), that when he departed, *the one that came next might succeed him*. Moreover, in Egypt the presbyters confirm, if a bishop is not present.⁸³ But because the presbyters that followed began to be found unworthy to hold the primacy, the custom was altered; the Council foreseeing that not order, but merit, ought to make a bishop; and that he should be appointed by the judgment of many priests, lest an unworthy person should rashly usurp the office, and be a scandal to many.⁸⁴

⁸¹ Goode's Divine Rule, Vol. II, p. 66.

⁸² Timothy is here said, we may observe, to have been ordained a *presbyter*. And I cannot but think that the passage, 1 Tim. 4: 14, is favorable to this view. For without adopting the translation which some have given of this passage, viz., "with the laying on of hands for the office of a presbyter," if we retain our own version, which appears to me more natural, who or what is "*the presbytery*?" Certainly not consisting altogether of the apostles, though it appears, from 2 Tim. 1: 6, that ordination was received by Timothy partly from St. Paul. But if presbyters joined in that ordination, it could not be to a higher *sacerdotal* grade or order than that of the presbyterhood. Nor is this inconsistent with his being called elsewhere an apostle, which name might be given him as one appointed to be a superintendent of a church.—*Divine Rule*, Vol. II, p. 64.

⁸³ The author of the "Questiones in Vet. et Nov. Test.," which have been ascribed to Augustine, but are probably not his, says, "In Alexandria, and through the whole of Egypt, if there is no bishop, a presbyter *consecrates*." (In Alexandria et per totam Ægyptum si desit Episcopus consecrat presbyter.) Where, however, one MS. reads, *confirms* (consignat). See Aug. Op., tom. iii, App., col. 93. On this subject, the 13th canon of the Council of Ancyra (in the code of the Universal Church) is also worth notice.—*Divine Rule*, *ibid*.

⁸⁴ Timotheum, presbyterum a se creatum, episcopum vocat, quia primi presbyteri episcopi appellabantur, ut recedente uno sequens ei succederet. Denique apud Ægyptum presbyteri consignant si præsens non sit episcopus. Sed quia cœperunt sequentes presbyteri indigni inveniri ad primatus

This passage, then, clearly contradicts the notion of our opponents as to the *essential* necessity by apostolical ordinance of the successional Episcopal consecration of all bishops.⁸⁵

A *presbyter*, you will observe, becomes the successor of the apostle; and the apostolical succession comes down through him, as a bishop; plainly contradicting the notion that the grace of ordination is restricted to a succession of bishops exclusively, and establishing, in the opinion of this author, the validity of presbyterian ordination. To this effect is this same author. "After the bishop, the apostle has subjoined the ordination (order) of the deaconship. Why; but that the ordination (order) of a bishop and presbyter is one and the same? For each is a priest; but the bishop is chief; so that every bishop is a presbyter, but not every presbyter a bishop. *For he is bishop who is chief among the presbyters.* Moreover, he notices that Timothy was ordained a presbyter, but *inasmuch as he had no other above him, he was a bishop.*" Hence he shows that Timothy, a *presbyter*, might ordain a *bishop*, because of his equality with him. "For it was neither lawful nor right for an inferior to ordain a superior, inasmuch as one cannot confer what he has not received."⁸⁶

tenendos, immutata est ratio, prospiciente Concilio, ut non ordo sed meritum crearet episcopum multorum sacerdotum judicio constitutum ne indignus temere usurparet et esset multis scandalum. Comment. in Eph. 4: 11, 12. Inter Op. Ambros., ed. Ben., tom. ii, app. col. 241, 242. The "Council" may, I suppose, be what Tertullian calls "*consensus ordinis.*"

⁸⁵ There are, also, indirect confirmatory proofs. Such, I think, is afforded by the account we have in Eusebius (vi, 29,) of the appointment of Fabianus to the bishopric of Rome, for the assembly that met to elect a bishop having fixed upon him, *placed him at once on the Episcopal throne.* (*Αμελλετως επι του θρονου της επισκοπης λαβοντας αυτον επιθειναι*), which seems to me irreconcilable with the notion of the essential necessity of Episcopal consecration, to have entitled him to the Episcopal seat, for he was installed in it without any such consecration.

⁸⁶ Post Episcopum tamen Diaconi ordinationem subiicit. Quare? nisi quia Episcopi et Presbyteri una ordinatio est? Uterque enim sacerdos



There is another passage which has a striking coincidence with the foregoing, and is probably from the same author, though found in an appendix to the works of Augustine. "That by presbyter is meant a bishop, the apostle Paul proves, when he instructs Timothy whom he had ordained a presbyter, respecting the character of one whom he would make a bishop. For what else is the bishop than the *first presbyter*, that is, the highest priest? For he [the bishop] calls them [the presbyters] by no other name than *fellow-presbyters* and *fellow-priests*. He therefore considers them of the same grade as himself." But he is careful by no means to do the same with regard to clerical persons of inferior rank. Not even with the deacons, for to place himself in the same category with them would be degrading his own rank. "Does the bishop call the *deacons* his *fellow-deacons*? Certainly not; because they are far inferior to him, and it were a disgrace to call the *judge a mere manager of a clerk's office*." If any are disposed to call in question this interpretation of the phrase, *judicem dicere primicerium*, I will only say that it was given to me by Prof. Rothe of Heidelberg, with whose name the reader has already become familiar, by the frequent references to his learned work on the Origin of the Christian Church. The following is also his exposition of the passage. "Where there is a real difference of office and rank, the *higher officer* cannot include himself in the official designation of the *lower*, without degrading himself. It would be a downright insult, to address the president of a court as the head of his clerks. Just so it does not enter

est, sed Episcopus primus est; ut omnis Episcopus Presbyter sit, non omnis Presbyter Episcopus; hic enim Episcopus est, qui inter Presbyteros primus est. Denique Timotheum Presbyterum ordinatum significat; sed quia ante se alterum non habebat, Episcopus erat. Unde et quemadmodum Episcopum ordinet ostendit. Neque enim fas erat aut licebat, ut inferior ordinaret maiorem; nemo enim tribuit quod non accepit.—*Comment in 1 Tim. 3: 8, inter Ambros. Op., Tom. II, app. 295.*

the mind of the bishop to call his deacons, *fellow-deacons*,—making himself thereby a deacon. Between these two officers there exists an actual difference in rank. On the other hand, he calls the presbyters his *fellow-presbyters*, because he sees no real difference between his office and theirs, but only a difference *in degree*; that is, he considers himself, in relation to the presbyters, as only *primus inter pares*, chief among equals. The offices of bishop and presbyter therefore are essentially one and the same; the very thing which Ambrosiaster wishes to prove. ‘For in Alexandria and throughout all Egypt, upon the decease of the bishop, the presbyter confirms (*consignat*).’ ” ⁸⁷

Here the presbyter performs another of the Episcopal functions,—by administering the rite, not only of ordination but of *confirmation*.⁸⁸

The full sacerdotal power is possessed by every presbyter, according to the authority of the earliest fathers. The apostolical fathers know no distinction between bishops and presbyters; and later ones make no difference in their *order* or *grade* of rank. The distinction of bishop is only a conventional arrangement made for mutual convenience, but in no wise incapacitating the presbyter for the performance of any of his sacerdotal offices. The right to ordain

⁸⁷ Presbyterum autem intelligi Episcopum probat Paulus Apostolus, quando Timotheum, quem ordinavit Presbyterum instruit, qualum debeat creare Episcopum. Quid est enim Episcopus nisi primus Presbyter, hoc est summus sacerdos? Denique non aliter quam Compresbyteros, Condiaconos suos dicit Episcopus? Non utique, quia multo inferiores sunt, et turpe est, iudicem dicere primicerium.—*Augustin. Op., Tom. 3, app., p. 77. Quaestiones in Veteris et Nov. Test., ex utroque mixtim, ed. Bened. Antwerp, 1700—3.*

⁸⁸ Whether the verb *consignare* expresses the confirmation of the baptized, or the imposition of hands upon those who were ordained, or on penitents, it was correctly accomplished by presbyters, in the absence of the bishop, whose presence was founded only on custom, and the canons of the church. But these could not have legalized such acts of the presbyter had not his authority been apostolical. He was there duly authorized to perform the functions of the Episcopal office.



still belongs to him ; and the bishop, when promoted to his office to preside over his fellow-presbyters, receives no new consecration or ordination, but continues still himself to ordain *as a presbyter*.

Such is a plain statement of this controverted point, and such the exposition which many Episcopal writers, even at the present day, give of this subject. Give up the delusive notion of divine right and apostolical succession, and you concede of course the validity of presbyterian ordination. Such Episcopalians themselves afford us the ablest refutations of the absurdities and arrogant pretensions of high-church Episcopacy.

We have next the authority of Jerome, who died A. D. 426. He was one of the most learned of the Latin fathers. Erasmus styles him "by far the most learned and most eloquent of all the Christians, and the prince of Christian divines." Jerome received his education at Rome, and was familiar with the Roman, Greek, and Hebrew languages. He travelled extensively in France and the adjacent countries. He resided, in the course of his life, at Constantinople, at Antioch, at Jerusalem, and at Bethlehem. By his great learning, and his extensive acquaintance with all that related to the doctrines and usages both of the Eastern and of the Western churches, he was eminently qualified to explain the rights and prerogatives of the priesthood.

But does Jerome testify to the right of presbyters to ordain? "What does a bishop," says he, "ordination excepted, that a presbyter may not do?"⁸⁹ This, however, is said of the relations of bishop and presbyter *as they then were*. This restriction of the right of ordaining to the bishops alone was a modern innovation, which had begun

⁸⁹ Quid enim facit, excepta ordinatione, Episcopus, quod presbyter non faciat?—*Ep. ad Evang.*, Ep. 101 alias 85. *Op. Ed. Paris*, 1693—1706, p. 802.

to distinguish them from the presbyters, and to subvert the original organization of the church. But it was an acknowledged fact, in his day, that the bishops had no authority from Christ or his apostles for their unwarrantable assumptions. "As the presbyters know that it is by the *custom of the church* that they are subject to him who is placed over them, so let the bishops know that they are above presbyters rather by the custom of the church than by the fact of our Lord's appointment, and that they (both bishops and presbyters) ought to rule the church in common, in imitation of the example of Moses."⁹⁰

He reviews the same subject with great point in his famous epistle to Evagrius, or, more properly in modern editions, to Evangelus. He rebukes with great severity certain persons who had preferred deacons in honor "above *presbyters*, i. e., *bishops*." Having thus asserted the identity of bishops and presbyters, he goes on to prove his position from Phil. 1: 1; from Acts 20: 17, 28; from Titus 1: 5; from 1 Tim. 4: 14; and from 1 Pet. 5: 1. "Does the testimony of these men seem of small account to you?" he proceeds to say, "then clangs the gospel trumpet,—that son of thunder whom Jesus so much loved, and who drank at the fountain of truth from the Saviour's breast. 'The *presbyter* to the elect lady and her children.' 2 John 1: 1; and in another epistle, 'The *presbyter* to the well-beloved Gaius.' 3 John 1: 1."

"As to the fact, that AFTERWARDS, one was ELECTED to preside over the rest, this was done as a remedy against schism; lest every one drawing his proselytes to himself, should rend the church of Christ. For even at Alexandria, from the evangelist Mark to the bishops Heraclas and Dionysius, the presbyters always chose one of their number, placed him in a superior station, and gave him

⁹⁰ Comment. in Epist. ad Titus, c. 1, v. 5. Op., Tom. 4. Paris, 1693—1706, p. 413.



the title of bishop; in the same manner as if an army should MAKE an emperor; or the deacons should choose from among themselves one whom they knew to be particularly active, and should call him ARCH-DEACON. For, excepting ordination, what is done by a bishop, which may not be done by a presbyter? Nor is it to be supposed, that the church should be one thing at Rome, and another in all the world besides. Both France and Britain, and Africa, and Persia, and the East, and India, and all the barbarous nations worship one Christ, observe one rule of truth. If you demand authority, the globe is greater than a city. Wherever a bishop shall be found, whether at Rome, or Eugubium, or Constantinople, or Rhegium, or Alexandria, or Tanis, he has the same pretensions, the same priesthood.”⁹¹

⁹¹ Sicut ergo Presbyteri sciunt, se ex Ecclesiae consuetudine ei, qui sibi praepositus fuerit, esse subiectos, ita Episcopi noverint, se magis consuetudine quam dispositionis Dominicae veritate Presbyteris esse maiores, et in commune debere Ecclesiam regere, imitantes Moysen, qui cum haberet in potestate solus praeesse populo Israel, septuaginta elegit, cum quibus populum iudicaret. Audio quendam in tantam erupisse vecordiam, ut Diaconos Presbyteris, id est Episcopis, anteferebat. Nam cum Apostolus perspicue doceat, eosdem esse Presbyteros quos Episcopos, quid patitur mensurarum et viduarum minister, ut supra eos se tumidus efferat, ad quorum preces Christi corpus sanguisque conficitur? Quaeris auctoritatem? Audi testimonium. *Paulus et Timotheus, servi Iesu Christi, omnibus sanctis in Christo Iesu, qui sunt Philippis, cum Episcopis et Diaconis.* Vis et aliud exemplum? In Actibus Apostolorum ad unius Ecclesiae sacerdotes ita Paulus loquitur: *Attendite vobis et cuncto gregi, in quo vos Spiritus Sanctus posuit Episcopos, ut regeretis Ecclesiam Domini, quam acquisivit sanguine suo.* Ac ne quis contentiose in una Ecclesia plures Episcopos fuisse contendat, audi et aliud testimonium, in quo manifestissime comprobatur, eundem esse Episcopum atque Presbyterum. *Propter hoc reliqui te in Creta, ut, quae deerant, corrigeres, et constitueres Presbyteros per civitates, sicut et ego tibi mundavi.* Si quis est sine crimine, unius uxoris vir, filios habens fideles, non in accusatione luxuriae, aut non subditos. Oportet enim Episcopum sine crimine esse, quasi Dei dispensatorem. Et ad Timotheum: *Noli negligere gratiam, quae in te est, quae tibi data est prophetiae, per impositionem manuum Presbyterii.* Sed et Petrus in prima epistola: *Presby-*

Here the presbyters themselves elect one of their number and make him a bishop, so that even the bishop is ordained by the presbyters, if indeed it can be called an *ordination*; if not, then he is only a presbyter still, having no better right to ordain than they themselves have. Such, Jerome assures, is the usage in every country. There was but one ordination for bishops and presbyters in his time, though bishops had now begun exclusively to administer it. But we have a stream of testimonies coming down to us from the time of the apostles, that it had been the custom of the church from the beginning, for bishops and presbyters to receive the same ordination. This is another consideration of much importance, to show that presbyters were entitled to ordain. Having themselves received Episcopal ordination, they were duly qualified to administer the same.

But Jerome himself attributes to presbyters the original right of ordination. "Priests who baptize, and administer the eucharist, anoint with oil, impose hands, instruct catechumens, constitute Levites and others priests, have less reason to take offence at us, explaining these things, or at

teros, inquit, in vobis precor compresbyter et testis passionum Christi et futuræ gloriæ, quæ revelanda est, particeps, regere gregem Christi, et inspicere non ex necessitate, sed voluntarie iuxta Deum. Quod quidem græce significantius dicitur ἐπισκοποῦντες, id est superintendentes, unde et nomen Episcopi tractum est. Parva tibi videntur tantorum vivorum testimonia? Clangat tuba evangelica, filius tonitru, quem Iesus amavit plurimum, qui de pectore salvatoris doctrinarum fluentia potavit: Presbyter Electæ Dominæ et filiis eius, quos ego diligo in veritate. Et in alia epistola: Presbyter Caio Carissimo, quem ego diligo in veritate. Quod autem postea unus electus est, qui ceteris praeponeretur, in schismatis remedium factum est, ne unusquisque ad se trahens Christi Ecclesiam rumperet. Nam Alexandriae a Marco Evangelista usque ad Heraclam et Dionysium Episcopos Presbyteri semper unum ex se electum in excelsiori gradu collocatum Episcopum nominabant, quomodo si exercitus Imperatorem faciat, aut Diaconi eligant de se quem industrium noverint et Archidiaconum vocent. Quid enim facit excepta ordinatione Episcopus, quod Presbyter non faciat?—Ep. ad Evang., 101 alias 85, p. 802.



the prophets foretelling them, than to ask of the Lord forgiveness."

The relevancy of this passage depends upon the question who are the *sacerdotes*, priests of whom Jerome speaks. He is commenting upon Zephaniah 3: 3. Her *princes* within her, are roaring lions, by which he understands her *priests*, saying, "I am aware, that I shall offend many because I interpret these things as said of bishops and presbyters."⁹² Then, after remarking, at length, upon this degenerate priesthood, he adds the sentence above. Jerome, therefore, ascribes to presbyters and bishops alike, the same right to constitute "Levites and others priests," applying the terms, not to the Jewish priesthood, but to the clergy of the Christian church in his day, and including both bishops and presbyters under the same category, as possessing equal rights to baptize, to ordain, and to administer the sacraments.

That the right of ordination belonged to presbyters, is evident, from the authority of Eutychius, of Alexandria, which, also illustrates still farther the usage of this church, and confirms the testimony of Jerome. The citation with the translation is from Goode. This author with reference to Eutychius says, "His words are these; after mentioning that Mark the Evangelist went and preached at Alexandria, and appointed Hananias the first patriarch there, he adds, 'Moreover he appointed twelve presbyters with Hananias, who were to remain with the Patriarch, so that, when the Patriarchate was vacant, they might elect one of the twelve presbyters, upon whose head the other eleven might place their hands and bless him [or, invoke a bless-

⁹² Scio offensurum me esse plurimos quod super episcopis et presbyteris hæc interpreter . . . Sacerdotes qui dant baptismum et ad eucharistiane Domini uniprecantur adventum, faciunt oleum chrismatis, manus imponunt, catechumenos erudiunt, Levitas et alios constituunt sacerdotes, non tam indignentur nobis hæc exponentibus et prophetis vaticinantibus, quam Dominum deprecantur.—*Tom.* 3, pp. 1672, 1673.

ing upon him], and create him Patriarch, and then choose some excellent man and appoint him presbyter with themselves in the place of him who was thus made Patriarch, that thus there might always be twelve. Nor did this custom respecting the presbyters, namely, that they should create their Patriarchs from the twelve presbyters, cease at Alexandria until the times of Alexander, Patriarch of Alexandria, who was of the number of the 318 [bishops at Nice.] But he forbade the presbyters to create the Patriarch for the future, and decreed that when the Patriarch was dead, the bishops should meet together and ordain the Patriarch. Moreover he decreed that on a vacancy of the Patriarchate they should elect, either from any part of the country, or from those twelve presbyters, or others, as circumstances might prescribe, some excellent man and create him Patriarch. And thus that ancient custom by which the Patriarch used to be created by the presbyters disappeared, and in its place succeeded the ordinance for the creation of the Patriarch by the bishops. ⁹³

⁹³ The following is Selden's translation of the passage from the Arabic : — "Constituit item Marcus Evangelista duodecim Presbyteros cum Hanania, qui nempe manerent cum Patriarcha, adeo ut cum vacaret Patriarchatus, eligerent unum e duodecim Presbyteris cujus capiti reliqui undecim manus imponerent eumque benedicerent et Patriarcham eum crearent, et dein virum aliquem insignem eligerent eumque Presbyterum secum constituerent loco ejus qui sic factus est Patriarcha, ut ita semper extarent duodecim. Neque desiit Alexandria institutum hoc de Presbyteris, ut scilicet Patriarchas crearent ex Presbyteris duodecim, usque ad tempora Alexandri Patriarchæ Alexandrini qui fuit ex numero illo cccxviii. Is autem vetuit ne deinceps Patriarcham Presbyteri crearent. Et decrevit ut mortuo Patriarcha convenirent Episcopi qui Patriarcham ordinarent. Decrevit item ut, vacante Patriarchatu, eligerent sive ex quacunque regione, sive ex duodecim illis Presbyteris, sive aliis, ut res ferebat, virum aliquem eximium, eumque Patriarcham crearent. Atque ita evanuit institutum illud antiquius, quo creari solitus a Presbyteris Patriarcha, et successit in locum ejus decretum de Patriarcha ab Episcopis creando." — *Eutych. Patr. Alex. Ecclesie suæ orig.* Ed. J. Selden. London, 1642. 4to. pp. 29—31.



"I have given this passage in full, because it has been sometimes replied that it referred only to the *election* of the Patriarch, and that we must suppose that he was afterwards consecrated to his office by bishops. But it is evident to any one who takes the whole passage together, that such an explanation is altogether inadmissible; and moreover, the very same word (which, following Selden, we have translated *created*) is used with respect to the act of the presbyters, as is afterwards used with respect to the act of the bishops in the appointment.

"I am quite aware that very considerable learning has been employed in the attempt to explain away this passage, and the reader who wishes to see how a plain statement may thus be darkened, may refer to the works mentioned below."⁹⁴

Gieseler pertinently remarks, in regard to it, that "it is at least certain that the part which is contradictory to the usage of later times has not been interpolated; and so far it has an historical value."⁹⁵

The validity of presbyterian ordination, and the right of presbyters to ordain, was never called in question, according to Planck, until the bishops began, about the middle of the third century, to assert the doctrine of the apostolical succession. "With the name it seemed desirable also to inherit the authority of the apostles. For this purpose they availed themselves of the right of ordination. The right of ordination of course devolved exclusively upon the bishops as alone competent rightly to administer it. As they had been duly constituted the successors of the apostles, so also had they alone the right to communicate the same in part or fully, by the imposition of hands.

⁹⁴ See Abr. Echell. Eutychius Vindicatus, Morinus De Ordinatio, Renaudot. Hist. Patriarch Alex.

⁹⁵ Cited in our Christian Antiquities, p. 103. In addition to the authors mentioned above, by Goode, are Le Quien and Petavius. Comp. also, Neander, Allgem. Gesch., 1, pp. 325, 326, 2d edit., Note. J. F. Rehkopf, Vitae Patriarcharum Alexandr. fasc., I and II.

From this time onward, to give the rite more effect, it was administered with more imposing solemnity." And in all probability it became customary at this early period to utter in the laying on of hands, those words of prelatical arrogance and shocking irreverence, 'Receive the Holy Ghost' for the office and work of a bishop.⁹⁶

Dr. Neander has assured the writer, in conversation on this point, that beyond a doubt presbyters were accustomed to ordain in the ages immediately succeeding the apostles. The testimony of Firmilian, given above, is, according to Neander, explicit in confirmation of this fact, and the same sentiments are also expressed or implied in his works. If further evidence is needed on this point, it is given at length and with great ability by Blondell, who, after occupying one hundred quarto pages with the argument, sums up the result of the discussion with the following syllogism.

"To whom the usage of the church has assigned, in reality, the same functions, to them, it has also from the beginning ascribed the same ministerial parity, and of course, the same dignity.

"But the usage of the church has assigned to bishops and presbyters, in reality, the same functions in the rites of confirmation, of dedication of churches, of taking the veil, of the reconciling of penitents, and in the ordination of presbyters, deacons, &c.

"Therefore, it has, from the beginning, declared that bishops and presbyters, are in all respects equal, and of necessity, that they are the same in dignity or rank."⁹⁷

Even the decrees of council, which restrict the right of ordination to the bishops alone, distinctly imply that from the beginning it was not so limited. Why deny, by a formal decree, to presbyters the right to ordain, if they

⁹⁶ Planck, *Gesell. Verfass.*, 1, pp. 158—161.

⁹⁷ *Apologia pro sententia Hieronomi de Episcopis et presbyteris*. Amstelod., 1616, 4to.

have never enjoyed that right? The prohibition is an evident restriction of their early prerogatives.

But I forbear; enough has been said to vindicate the right of presbyters to ordain, and to perform all the functions of the ministerial office. Indeed, I cannot but wonder that it should ever have been called in question. How extraordinary the hardihood with which, in the face of authorities a thousand times collated and repeated, we are still told that "the idea of ordination, by any but bishops was an unheard-of thing in the primitive church."⁹⁸ Whereas the burden of proof really rests upon them who venture upon such assertions. This idea is forcibly presented by Dr. Miller, in the following extract, with which we close this review of the authority of the fathers on the point now under consideration.

"The friends of prelacy have often, and with much apparent confidence, challenged us to produce out of all the early fathers, a single instance of an *ordination* performed by *presbyters*. Those who give this challenge might surely be expected, in all decency and justice, to have a case of *Episcopal* ordination ready to be brought forward, from the same venerable records. But have they ever produced such a case? They have not. Nor can they produce it. As there is, unquestionably, no instance mentioned in Scripture of any person, with the title of *bishop*, performing an ordination; so it is equally certain that no such instance has yet been found in any Christian writer within the *first two centuries*. Nor can a single instance be produced of a person, already ordained as a *presbyter*, receiving a new and second ordination as *bishop*. To find a precedent favorable to their doctrine, the advocates of Episcopacy

⁹⁸ "So much for the idea of any but bishops ordaining in the primitive church. Never was this allowed before the Reformation; either in the church, or by any sect however wild!"—*Review of Coleman's Christian Antiquities*, by H. W. D., a presbyter in Philadelphia.

have been under the necessity of wandering into periods when the simplicity of the gospel had, in a considerable degree, given place to the devices of men; and when the *man of sin* had commenced that system of unhallowed usurpation, which for so many centuries corrupted and degraded the church of God.

"Such is the result of the appeal to the early fathers. They are so far from giving even a semblance of support to the Episcopal claim, that, like the Scriptures, they every where speak a language wholly inconsistent with it, and favorable only to the doctrine of ministerial parity. What then shall we say of the assertions so often and so confidently made, that the doctrine of a superior order of *bishops* has been maintained in the church, 'from the earliest ages,' in 'the ages immediately succeeding the apostles,' and 'by all the fathers from the beginning?' What shall we say of the assertion, that the Scriptures, *interpreted* by the writings of the *early fathers*, decidedly support the same doctrine? I will only say, that those who find themselves able to justify such assertions, must have been much more successful in discovering early authorities in aid of their cause, than the most diligent, learned, and keen-sighted of their predecessors."⁹⁹

We have even high Episcopal authority for presbyterian ordination. Repugnant as this view of ordination is to the modern advocates of Episcopacy, the sentiments of Archbishop Cranmer, and the first protestant bishops of the church of England, were not widely different. The following extract from a highly interesting document contains the answer of the venerable prelate himself, to certain questions propounded to a select assembly at Windsor Castle, in the reign of Edward the sixth.

"A bishop may make a priest by the Scriptures, and so

⁹⁹ Miller's Letters, pp. 108, 109.



may princes and governors alsoe, and that by the auctoryty of God committed to them, and the people alsoe by their election. For as we reade that bishops have done it, so Christian emperors and princes usually have done it. And the people before Christian princes were, commonly did elect their bishops and priests. In the New Testament, he that is appointed to be a bishop or a priest, needeth no consecration by the Scripture; for election or appointing thereto is sufficient." ¹⁰⁰

A volume might be filled with authorities from the English church alone, in which both her most distinguished prelates and her most eminent scholars concede to presbyters a virtual equality with bishops, and a right to ordain.

The Necessary Erudition of a Christian Man, drawn up with great care, approved by both houses of Parliament in 1543, and prefaced by an epistle from the king himself, declares, that "priests [*presbyters*] and bishops are, by God's law, one and the same; and that the powers of *ordination* and excommunication belong equally to both." Under Elizabeth it was enacted by parliament, "that the *ordination* of foreign churches should be held valid."

The learned Whittaker, of Cambridge, declares the doctrine of the reformers to be, that "presbyters, being by divine right the same as bishops, *they might warrantably set other presbyters over the churches.*"

Archbishop Usher, one of the brightest ornaments of the Episcopal church, on being asked by Charles I, in the Isle

¹⁰⁰ See transcript of the whole of the original, which was subscribed with Cranmer's own hand, in Bishop Stillingfleet's *Irenicum*, Part II, c. 7, § 2. See, also, Burnet's *History of the Reformation*, P. 1, pp. 318, 321. Cited from Conder's *Nonconformity*. Many other authorities from English writers are given in S. Mather's *Apology for the Liberty of the Churches*, Chap. 2, p. 51. They have also been collected, and collated with great industry and research, by Rev. Dr. Smyth, in his *Apostolical Succession, and his Presbytery not Prelacy*. So, also, in an article in the *Christian Spectator*, New Series, Vol. II, p. 720, from whence several of the authorities given below are taken.

of Wight, whether he found in antiquity that "*presbyters alone did ordain?*" answered, "*yes,*" and that he would show his Majesty more—even where *presbyters* alone successively ordained *bishops*; and brought us an instance of this, the presbyters of Alexandria choosing and making their own bishop, from the days of Mark till Heraclas and Dionysius.

Bishop Stillingfleet says, "It is acknowledged by the stoutest champions of Episcopacy, before these late unhappy divisions, that ordination performed by presbyters in case of necessity is valid."

Bishop Forbes. "Presbyters have by divine right the power of ordaining as well as of preaching and baptizing."

Sir Peter King, Lord Chancellor of England, after asserting the equality of bishops and presbyters, and showing at length, that the latter had full authority to administer the ordinances, adds, "As for ordination, I find clearer proofs of presbyters *ordaining*, than of their administering the Lord's supper."

The first reformers, under the reign of King Edward, according to Neal, in his history of the Puritans, "believed but two orders of churchmen, in holy Scripture—bishops and deacons; and, consequently, that bishops and priests [presbyters] were but different ranks or degrees of the same order." Acting in this principle, "they gave the right hand of fellowship to foreign churches, and to ministers who had not been ordained by bishops."

Even at the present time the validity of presbyterian ordination is acknowledged by many in the Episcopal church. Not twenty years since, one of the principal conductors of the Christian Observer said to an American gentleman, "I have not for ten years seen the man who was so utterly foolish, as to claim any exclusive divine right for our ordination, or ordinances; or who hesitated to acknowledge other communions as churches of Christ."



And Goode also, who has written from Cambridge, with great ability against the Tractarians, says:—"I admit that for the latter point [ordination by bishops alone, as successors of the apostles], there is not any Scripture proof; but we shall find here, as in other cases, that as the proof is not to be found in Scripture, so antiquity also is divided with respect to it; and moreover, that though it is the doctrine of our church, yet that it is held by her with an allowance for those who may differ from her on the point, and not as if the observance of it was requisite by divine command, and essential to the validity of all ordinations; though, for the preservation of the full *ecclesiastical* regularity of her own orders, she has made it essential to the ministers of her own communion."¹⁰¹ In support of this opinion he proceeds to enumerate many of the authorities of the fathers given above.

Finally, we add the following extract, not again an "irreverent dissenter," in the flippant cant of one of the Tractarians, but a devoted son of their own church, a distinguished layman of England, who has written with great ability and good effect, against the doctrines of Puseyism and High Church.

"It is no part of my plan to trace the origin or course of departure from the system of church government in the apostolical times, as it lies before us in all its simplicity. I admit—indeed, as the lawyers say, it is a part of my case—that some change was unavoidable; and I see nothing in the present constitution of the church of England that is inconsistent with the *principle* of the apostles. But to say that they are identical, is a mere abuse of words. Still less is it to be heard say without some impatience, that there is safety in her communion only as she has descended from the apostles, through all the changes and abominations that have intervened."¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ Divine Rule, Vol. II, pp. 57, 58. ¹⁰² Bowdler's Letters, pp. 32, 33.

After going through with a sketch of the historical argument in defence of his sentiments and citing many of the authorities given above, he proceeds:—"I am aware that in St. Jerome's time there existed generally, though by no means universally, this difference between the bishop and the presbyters, viz., that to the former was then confided the power of ordination. The transition from perfect equality to absolute superiority was not suddenly effected: it was the growth of time; not of years, but of centuries; the distinction of authority or office preceding that of order or degree in the church, and being introductory to it. With the former I have no concern, it being sufficient to show, that as a distinct and superior order in the church, Episcopacy, in the modern acceptation of the term, did not exist in the time of the apostles; and that, however expedient and desirable such an institution might be, it cannot plead the sanction of apostolic appointment or example. It may be difficult to fix the period exactly when the Episcopate was first recognized as a distinct *order* in the church, and when the consecration of bishops, as such, came to be in general use. Clearly not, I think, when St. Jerome wrote. Thus much at least is certain, viz., that the government of each church, *including the ordination of ministers*, was at first in the hands of the presbytery: that when one of that body was raised to the office of president, and on whom the title of bishop was conferred, it was simply by the election (co-optatio) of the other presbyters, whose appointment was final, requiring no confirmation or consecration at the hands of any other prelates; and that each church was essentially independent of every other.

"If then all this be so, there seems to be an end to the question; for under whatever circumstances the privilege of ordaining was afterwards committed to the bishop, he could of necessity receive no more than it was in their power to bestow, from whom he received it, who were co-



ordinate presbyters, not superiors. At whatever period, therefore, it was adopted, and with whatever uniformity it might be continued, and whatever of value or even authority it might hence acquire ; still as an apostolical institution it has none: there is a gap which can never be filled; or rather, the link by which the whole must be suspended is wanting, and can never be supplied. There can be no apostolical succession of that which had no apostolical existence; whereas the averment to be of any avail must be, not only that it existed in the time of the apostles, but was so appointed by them as that there can be no true church without it."¹⁰³

The right of presbyters, then, to ordain, is admitted by moderate Episcopalians even at the present time.¹⁰⁴ It was maintained by the reformers generally, both in England, and on the continent, and was their undoubted prerogative in the early ages of the Christian church.

To sum up all that has been said—if presbyters and bishops are known by the same names—if they are required to possess the same qualifications, and if they do actually discharge the same duties, then what higher evidence can we expect or desire of their equality and identity? This course of argumentation is precisely similar to that by which orthodoxy asserts and defends the supreme divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and his equality with the Father. And none perhaps more readily admit the validity of this mode of argumentation, on this cardinal principle in the Christian system, than the members of the Episcopal communion. What is the argument for this oneness of Christ with the Father? Simply that he is called by the names, that he possesses the attributes, that he receives the honors and performs the works of the Father; and, there-

¹⁰³ Bowdler's Letters, pp. 48—50.

¹⁰⁴ Comp. Whateley's Kingdom of Christ, pp. 151, 212.

fore, is one with Him. If, then, this course of reasoning commands our assent in these profound mysteries, why not much more in the case under consideration? We confidently rest, therefore, in the conclusion of the learned Dr. Wilson, that "whatever misconstructions of the presbyterial office may have obtained, it is and always will be, the highest ordinary office in the Christian church; and no presbyter, who is officially such, can be less than a bishop, and authorized to instruct, govern, and administer, and ordain, at least in conjunction with his co-presbyters of the same presbytery and council."

4. Bishops themselves, in their ministerial character, exercised only the jurisdiction, and performed merely the offices, of presbyters in the primitive church.

For the sake of argument, let us admit "that this office of bishop is disclosed to us in the Christian church in the very earliest records of history. Within ten years after the death of St. John, we find that the three orders of ministers were actually denominated bishop, priest and deacon; and to each was assigned the same office, together with nearly the same power and duty as appertain to them at the present day. Hear how Ignatius speaks to the Philadelphians; "Attend to the bishop, and to the presbytery, and to the deacons."¹⁰⁵ Such is the evident exultation with which Episcopalians appeal to Ignatius. It is clear beyond a doubt, that this writer does speak of bishops, presbyters and deacons; and that, in strains almost of profane adulation, he seeks to exalt the authority both of bishops and presbyters. But the learned need hardly to be reminded that suspicion rests upon all these epistles of Ignatius. Many, both in this country and in Europe, who are most competent to decide upon their merits, have pronounced them undoubted forgeries. No confidence can

¹⁰⁵ Bishop De Lancey's Faithful Bishop. Boston, 1843, p. 17.

be placed upon them as historical authority. Whether they really belong to the second, third or fourth century, is altogether uncertain. They have been often and carefully canvassed by eminent scholars, both in America and in Europe. Professor Norton declares them to be undoubted forgeries. Rothe has written with surpassing ability a defence of them. But the most probable conjecture, and the one most generally received, is, that they are filled with interpolations from various hands, and of different dates. Such is Dr. Neander's opinion, as stated to the writer in conversation upon them.

The great Milton, after exposing the absurdities, corruptions and anachronisms of these epistles, proceeds to say, "These, and other like passages, in abundance through all those short epistles, must either be adulterate, or else Ignatius was not Ignatius, nor a martyr, but most adulterate and corrupt himself. In the midst, therefore, of so many forgeries, where shall we fix to dare say this is Ignatius? As for his style, who knows it, so disfigured and interrupted as it is, except they think that where they meet with any thing sound and orthodoxal, there they find Ignatius? And then they believe him, not for his own authority, but for a truth's sake, which they derive from elsewhere. To what end then should they cite him as authentic for Episcopacy, when they cannot know what is authentic in him, but by the judgment which they brought with them, and not by any judgment which they might safely learn from him? How can they bring satisfaction from such an author, to whose very essence the reader must be fain to contribute his own understanding? Had God ever intended that we should have sought any part of useful instruction from Ignatius, doubtless he would not have so ill provided for our knowledge, as to send him to our hands in this broken and disjointed plight; and if he intended no such thing, we do injuriously in thinking to taste better the pure

evangelic manna by seasoning our mouths with the tainted scraps and fragments of an unknown table, and searching among the verminous and polluted rags dropped overworn from the toiling shoulders of time, with these deformedly to quilt and interlace the entire, the spotless and undecaying robe of truth, the daughter, not of time, but of heaven, only bred up here below in Christian hearts between two grave and holy nurses, the doctrine and discipline of the gospel."¹⁰⁶

But we will suppose these epistles to be the genuine productions of Ignatius, and that he himself is one of those "apostolic men who drank in Christianity from the living lips of the apostles themselves." Grant it all. What then? Do not these epistles testify explicitly, clearly, fully, "to this superiority of bishops in government and ordination over presbyters and deacons?" Not in the least. What, we ask, was the diocese of these bishops of Ignatius's epistles? Nothing but single parishes. What were these venerable bishops themselves? Nothing more than the pastors of a single congregation. They were merely parish ministers, parochial bishops; and, though bearing the name of bishop, they were as unlike a modern diocesan as can well be imagined. This fact deserves a careful consideration. Let us not deceive ourselves with a name, a title. We are not inquiring after names, but things. Because we read of primitive bishops in the early church, must we suppose that each, of necessity, had the superiority, or enjoyed the proud distinction of the modern dignitary of the church who bears the same title? The name determines nothing in regard to the official rank and duties of a primitive bishop. Give to a congregational or presbyterian minister this title, and you have made him truly a primitive bishop. These ancient dignitaries, down to the third century, and in many instances, even later,

¹⁰⁶ Milton's Prelatical Episcopacy. Prose Works, Vol. I, pp. 79, 80.

exercised no wider jurisdiction, and performed no higher offices, than a modern presbyter, or any pastor of a single parish or congregation.

In support of the foregoing representation, we have to offer the following considerations :

(a) By all primitive writers, the bishop's charge is denominated invariably a *church*, a *congregation*; never in the plural, *churches* or *congregations*.

(b) It is admitted by Episcopalians themselves, that the diocese of a primitive bishop comprised only a single church.

(c) The Christians under the charge of these ancient bishops, all were accustomed to meet in one place, like the people of a modern parish or congregation.

(d) All under his charge were, in many instances, as familiarly known unto their bishop himself, as the people of a parish to their pastor.

(e) So many bishops are found in a single territory, of limited extent, that no one could have exercised a jurisdiction beyond the bounds of a single parish.

(f) The charge of a primitive bishop is known, in many instances, not to have equalled that of a modern presbyter or pastor.

(a) By all primitive writers, the bishop's charge is denominated invariably a *church*, a *congregation*; never in the plural, *churches* or *congregations*.

The cure of a primitive bishop is never, in a single instance, represented to comprise several congregations, like that of a modern diocesan; but always is restricted to a single body of Christians, denominated a church. As the epistles of Paul the apostle are addressed to the church at Rome, at Corinth, at Ephesus, &c., so those of the apostolical fathers, Clement, Polycarp and Ignatius are

addressed, in like manner, to a single church—to the church at Corinth, at Philippi, at Ephesus, at Smyrna, &c. Neither is the word *church* ever used by the early fathers in a generic sense, for a national or provincial church, as we speak of the church of England, or of Scotland. The fact is so indisputable, that no time need be wasted in proof of it. But it is worthy of particular attention, as illustrative of the nature of a bishop's office. It presents his duties and his office in total contrast with those which prelaty assigns to bishops. It reveals the primitive bishop to us merely as a parish minister.

“Now as one bishop is invariably considered, in the most ancient usage, as having only one *ἐκκλησία*, it is manifest that his inspection at first was only over one parish. Indeed, the words congregation and parish are, if not synonymous, predicable of each other. The former term relates more properly to the people as actually congregated, the other relates to the extent of ground which the dwelling houses of the members of one congregation occupy. Accordingly, the territory to which the bishop's charge extended, was always named, in the period I am speaking of, in Greek *παροικία*, in Latin *parochia*, or rather *paræcia*, which answers to the English word *parish*, and means properly a neighborhood.”¹⁰⁷

In the sense above stated, the word in question is said to be used at least six hundred times in the writings of Eusebius alone. Such continued to be the bishop's charge down to the fourth century.

(b) It is admitted by Episcopalians themselves, that the diocese of a primitive bishop comprised only a single church.

On this point the authority of the late Dr. Burton,

¹⁰⁷ Campbell's Lectures, pp. 106, 107.

regius professor at Oxford, is equally explicit and unexceptionable. In his history of the church at the beginning of the second century, he says:—"The term diocese was not then known; though there may have been instances where the care of more than one congregation was committed to a single bishop, of which we have a very early example in all the Cretan churches being entrusted by Paul to Titus. The name which was generally applied to the flock of a single pastor, was one from which our present word *parish* is derived, which signified his superintendence over the *inhabitants* of a particular place."¹⁰⁸

Again, at the commencement of the third century, "The term diocese, as has been observed in a former chapter, was of later introduction, and was borrowed by the church from the civil constitution of the empire. At the period which we are now considering, a bishop's diocese was more analogous to a modern parish, and such was the name which it bore. Each parish had, therefore, its own bishop, with a varying number of presbyters, or priests and deacons."¹⁰⁹

"As for the word diocese, by which the bishop's flock is now expressed, I do not remember that ever I found it used in this sense by any of the ancients. But there is another word still retained by us, by which they frequently denominated the bishop's cure; and that is *parish*,"¹¹⁰ Every bishop had but one congregation or church. This is a remark which deserves your particular notice; as it regards an essential point in the constitution of the primitive church, a point which is generally admitted by those who can make any pretensions to the knowledge of Christian antiquities. . . . Now as one bishop is invariably considered

¹⁰⁸ History of the Christian Church, p. 179.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., pp. 263, 264.

¹¹⁰ King's Primitive Church, p. 15.

in the most ancient usage as having only one *ἐκκλησία*, church, it is manifest that his inspection, at first, was only one parish."¹¹¹ Instead, therefore, of presiding over myriads of his fellow-men with authority, which even princes might envy, this your ancient bishop was nothing more than a humble parish minister, having the charge of some little flock over whom he had been duly appointed an overseer in the service of the chief Shepherd.

(c) The Christians, under the charge of these ancient bishops, all were accustomed to meet in one place, like the people of a modern parish or congregation.

This is incontrovertibly evident from the fathers of the second, and even of the third century, such as the writings of Ignatius,¹¹² Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian and Cyprian. "Now, from the writings of those fathers, it is evident that the whole flock assembled in the same place. *ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ*, with their bishop and presbyters, as on other occasions, so in particular, every Lord's-day, or every Sunday, as it was commonly called, for the purposes of public worship, hearing the Scriptures read, and receiving spiritual exhortations. The perseverance in this practice is warmly recommended by the ancients, and urged on all the Christian brethren, from the consideration of the propriety there is, that those of the same church and parish, and under the same bishop, should all join in one prayer and one supplication, as people who have one mind and one hope. For, it is argued, 'if the prayer of one or two have great efficacy, how much more efficacious must that be which is made by the bishop and the whole church. He, therefore, who doth not assemble with him is denomi-

¹¹¹ Campbell's Lectures, pp. 105, 106.

¹¹² For a purpose like the present, we may safely appeal to Ignatius; for though the work may be reasonably suspected to have been interpolated to aggrandize the Episcopal order, it was never suspected of any interpolation with a view to lessen it.

nated proud and self-condemned.'¹¹³ Again, as there was but one place of meeting, so there was but one communion table or altar, as they sometimes metaphorically called it. 'There is but one altar,' said Ignatius, 'for there is but one bishop;'¹¹⁴ and accordingly, one place of worship. To this may be added the authority of Stillingfleet. "For although when the churches increased, the occasional meetings were frequent in several places, yet still there was but one church, and one altar, and one baptistry, and one bishop, with many presbyters assisting him; and this is so very plain in antiquity, as to the churches planted by the apostles themselves in several parts, that none but a stranger to the history of the church can ever call it in question."¹¹⁵

We have here another illustration of the parochial Episcopacy, which, in the ancient church, restricted the labors of the minister of Christ to a single church and congregation.

(d) All under his charge were, in some instances, as familiarly known unto their bishop himself, as are the people of a parish to their pastor.

Polycarp, for example, bishop of Smyrna, is exhorted by Ignatius to know all of his church by name, even the men-servants and maid-servants; to take care of the widows within his diocese; to take cognizance personally of all marriages; and to suffer nothing to escape his notice.¹¹⁶

¹¹³ *Εἰ γὰρ ἐνὸς καὶ δευτέρου προσευχὴ τοσαύτην ἰσχὺν ἔχει, πόσῳ μᾶλλον ἢ τε τῷ ἐπισκόπῳ καὶ πάσης ἐκκλησίας; Ὁ δὲν μὴ ἐρχόμενος ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ, καὶ ἑαυτὸν διέκρινεν.*—*Ep. ad Eph.*, c. 5.

¹¹⁴ *Ἐν θυσιαστήριον ὡς εἰς ἐπίσκοπος.* *Ep. ad Phil.*, c. 8. Campbell's Lectures, p. 109.

¹¹⁵ Stillingfleet, *Serm. against Separat.*, p. 27, cited by Clarkson, p. 17.

¹¹⁶ *Ἐξ ὀνόματος πάντας ζητεῖ. Δούλους καὶ δούλας μὴ ὑπερηφάνει· Χῆραι μὴ ἀμελείσθωσαν. Πρέπει δὲ τοῖς γαμοῖσι καὶ ταῖς γαμομέναις, μετὰ γνώμης τῷ ἐπισκόπῳ τὴν ἐνωσιν ποιεῖσθαι. Μηδὲν ἄνευ γνώμης σε γινέσθω.*—*Ignatius ad Polycarp*, c. 4, 5.

All this evidently requires of the bishop a personal acquaintance with the people of his charge, even more familiar, and a personal supervision over them more minute, than that of the pastor of a single parish in any of our cities. Even the bishop of Tyre had a diocese so small that he had a personal knowledge of the Christians within it.¹¹⁷ Carthage, again, was one of the largest cities in the world; and yet Cyprian, the bishop of that city, made it a duty to have a familiar acquaintance with all his people, and to provide for the needy and destitute among them.¹¹⁸ To such primitive Episcopacy as this who can object?

(e) So many bishops are found in a single territory of limited extent, that no one could have exercised jurisdiction beyond the bounds of a single parish.

Take, for example, a single province, that of Africa; and in doing this, I am happy to avail myself of the inquiries of another. "The testimony of Du Pin on this point, himself a prelatist, is invaluable. He describes, in the first place, the ancient province of Africa, as nearly commensurate with the modern Barbary States, and then proceeds to remark as follows:

"All this tract, both before and after the subjection of the Romans, contained an almost countless number of people. There were found cities, towns, boroughs, military stations (*castellis*), and villages, both of natives and colonists, in great number; and, by the fertility of the soil, and abundance of its produce, as well as by mercantile trade, it became very wealthy. Hence we find so great a

¹¹⁷ Schoene, *Geschichtsforschungen*, III, p. 336.

¹¹⁸ Cumque ego vos pro me vicarios miserim ut expungeretis necessitates fratrum nostrorum sumptibus, si qui vellent suas artes exercere, additamento quantum satis esset desideria eorum juvaretis, simul etiam et aetates eorum et conditiones et merita discerneretis; ut etiam nunc ego, cui cura incumbit omnes optime nosse et dignos quosque, et humiles et mites ad ecclesiasticæ administrationis officia promoverem.—*Ep.* 38, p. 51.

multitude of Christians in these regions, to govern whom were appointed very many bishops, far more numerous, indeed, and nearer together, than in some other parts of the Christian world. For in these parts it was customary to appoint bishops not only in great cities, but in villages, or villas, and in small cities (*in vicis aut villis et in modicis civitatibus*); which was guarded against by the 57th canon of the Council of Laodicea, and the 7th canon of that of Sardica. But that rule obtained, not in Africa, where it is on record that bishops were ordained not only in great cities, but in all the towns (*in cunctis oppidis*), and not unfrequently in villages and military stations (*in vicis et castellis*); which multitude of bishops' sees, that had sprung up, even from the very first rise of the African churches, was increased by the emulation of the Catholics and Donatists.' ¹¹⁹

"Such are the statements of one of the learned historians, one whose judgment is universally respected. Such, too, must be the convictions of every one who makes himself acquainted with the surviving documents of the African churches. Let any one turn over the pages of the Minutes of the Conference (*gesta collationis*) between the Catholics and Donatists at Carthage, in A. D. 411, at which 565 bishops were present, and he must come to the conclusion that Mons. Du Pin has told the truth.

"So strong is the evidence from this quarter, that Bingham is constrained to admit, that 'during the time of the schism of the Donatists, many new bishoprics were erected in *very small towns* in Africa; as appears from the acts of the Collation of Carthage, where the Catholics and Donatists mutually charge each other with the practice; that they divided single bishoprics sometimes into three or

¹¹⁹ Du Pin's Sacred Geography of Africa, prefixed to his edition of "The Seven Books of St. Optatus, bishop of Mileve in Africa," on the schism of the Donatists, published at Paris, A. D. 1700, p. 57.

four; and made bishops in *country towns and villages*, to augment the numbers of their parties.' ¹²⁰

"It will be observed, that this practice was pursued as well by the Orthodox as their opponents. Wherever a few people could be gathered together, they organized them into a church, and placed a bishop over them. And when that church became very numerous they divided it again (except in the great cities), just as we are accustomed to do at the present day. There was nothing in the idea of a church, or of a bishop, that forbade this practice. Nay, it was provided for by an ecclesiastical law of the province. The fifth canon of the second council of Carthage (A. D. 390) provides, that 'if, in the course of time, as religion prospers, any people of God should be so multiplied as to desire to have a rector of their own, they should have a bishop, in case they obtained the consent of him to whose authority the diocese was subject.'

"Du Pin says, 'We have drawn out of ancient documents the names of *six hundred and ninety bishoprics* in Africa.' ¹²¹ He annexes a catalogue of their names, and refers in every instance to the document or documents

¹²⁰ Bingham's Antiq. of Christ. Church, B. 2, c. 12, § 3.

¹²¹ Geog. Sac. Africae, p. 59. Shoene says, Geschichtsforschungen, Vol. III, 335, that in the time of Augustine there were *nine hundred* bishops in Africa. The number is evidently made out in the following manner. Augustine, in his minutes of the first day's conference between the Catholics and Donatists, says, that of the Catholics, 286 answered to their names, 20 subscribed not, 120 were absent, detained by reason of their age, infirmity, or other causes; and that 60 of their bishoprics were vacant, making a total of 426 bishops and 486 bishoprics.

Of the Donatists, 279 were present, many more than 120 were absent, and many of their bishoprics were vacant.—*Opera*, Tom. 9, p. 374, F. 375, 376, A. Antwerp, 1700.

Augustine also states, that the Maximinians were condemned by a council of 310 of the Donatists. Contra Parmenian, Lib. 1, Tom. 9, c. 18, p. 15, B. Contra Crescon. Don., Lib. 3, c. 52, p. 315, E. Lib. 4, c. 7, p. 331, D. The Donatists, moreover, themselves boasted that they had more than 400 bishops in Africa. Post. Coll., c. 24, p. 411, D. In addition to all these, the Maximinians afford another legion of bishops in this

where they are found. With reason, therefore, he says, 'there is not one of these that has not at some time a bishop, as may be gathered from ecclesiastical documents.' " ¹²²

(f) The charge of a primitive bishop is known in many instances not to have equalled that of a modern presbyter or pastor.

Bishops were found in villages and military stations in Africa, as we have just seen. Ischyryus was made bishop of a very small village, containing but few inhabitants.¹²³ Paul, one of the famous council of Nice, was only bishop of a fort, *προῦριον*, near the river Euphrates.¹²⁴ Eulogius and Barses, monks of Edessa, had each no city, but only a monastery for a diocese; or rather it was merely an honorary title, an empty name, without any charge connected with it.¹²⁵ Others, again, were bishops of cities where there were no Christians whatever, but some few in the country round about.¹²⁶

The council of Sardica, c. 7, and of Laodicea, c. 57, in the fourth century, denounced the custom of ordaining bishops "in villages and small cities, lest the authority of a bishop should be brought into contempt." But a hundred years later, the custom still prevailed to a considerable ex-

same province, 100 or more of whom condemned Priminianus. *Contra Crescon. Don.*, Lib. 4, c. 6, p. 331, D. *Post. Coll.*, c. 30. We are now prepared to make up the roll of African bishops. Catholics, 426, Donatists, 400, Maximinians, 100. Total, 926,—to say nothing of vacant sees. In such astonishing profusion are these dioceses, these Episcopal sees, scattered broad-cast over the single province of Africa.

¹²² New York Evangelist, Vol. XIV, p. 182. 1843.

¹²³ *Κώμη βραχυτάτη, καὶ ὀλίγων ἀνθρώπων.*—*Athanas. Apol.*, 2, T. 1, p. 200.

¹²⁴ Theodoret, *Eccl. Hist.*, Lib. 1, c. 6.

¹²⁵ "Οἱ καὶ ἐπισκόπων ἄμφω ὑστερον ἐγενέθην, οὐ πόλεως τινὸς ἀλλὰ τιμῆς ἐνεκεν . . . χειροτονηθέντες ἐν τοῖς ἰδίῳις μοναστηρίοις."—*Sozomen, Eccl. Hist.*, Lib. 6, c. 34, p. 691.

¹²⁶ Shoene, *Geschichtsforschungen*, III, p. 336.

tent. Even Gregory, one of the most learned and eloquent men of his age, worthy to have been "a professor of eloquence," after having studied in Caesarea, in Alexandria, and at Athens, was, in the last half of the fourth century, bishop, first of Zazime, "a dismal" place; and afterwards of Nazianzum, πόλις ἐντελούς, *villis oppidi*, an inferior place.¹²⁷ Even in the middle of the fifth century, diocesan Episcopacy was but partially established. In some countries, "there were bishops over many cities," but in others, they were still "consecrated in villages," κώμας.¹²⁸

But I need not enlarge. If any one wishes for further information on this point, he has only to refer to Clarkson on Primitive Episcopacy, an antiquated work, evincing a remarkable familiarity with the records of antiquity, from which a collection of facts, innumerable almost, has been brought together, all tending to show that the bishop of the primitive church had a charge no greater than any curate, or presbyter, or parish minister.

Grant then to prelacy all her claims. Run back her unbroken succession up to these days of primitive simplicity, and she leads you up, not to an Episcopal palace, but to the cottage, the cell, it may be, of an obscure curate. The modern bishop has only deceived himself with a name. While he reads of ancient bishops, he idly dreams of Episcopal powers and prerogatives unknown in the church until the days of Constantine the Great.

It is a sophism, often played off with effect, deceiving the simple and the wise, to surround an ancient and venerable name with modern associations. So delusive are our comparisons of that which is unknown with what is known; so deceptive our judgment of the past by the present. Tityrus, the poet's simple swain, foolishly thought Rome herself just such another as his own Mantua, where

¹²⁷ Sozomen, Eccl. Hist., Lib. 4, c. 26, p. 242.

¹²⁸ Sozomen, Eccl. Hist., Lib. 7, c. 19, p. 734.

the shepherds were wont to drive out their tender lambs. So he had seen whelps, like dogs; so kids, like goats. Thus he was wont to compare great things with small. But what was his surprise to see that imperial city rearing her head as high above others as the cypress rises above the limber shrubs.¹²⁹ He had deceived himself by his false comparisons. The same deception one practises upon himself by bringing a modern into comparison with a primitive bishop. But, on examination, the delusion vanishes. The far-spreading domains of the diocesan, which had charmed his fancy, shrink into a little hamlet; the proud Episcopal palace becomes a poor parsonage; and the lofty prelate, a humble presbyter, the pastor of a little flock.

The bearings of this view of the subject upon prelacy are obvious.

1. It annuls the virtue of Episcopal ordination.

The relations of the foregoing view to the validity of Episcopal ordination exclusively, are clearly set forth in the following passage from Clarkson, himself an Episcopalian:

"Hereby, also, some mistakes about Episcopal *ordinations*, of ill consequence, may be rectified. A bishop, in the best ages of Christianity, was no other than the pastor of a single church. A pastor of a single congregation is now as truly a bishop. They were duly ordained in those ages, who were set apart for the work of the ministry by the pastor of a single church, with the concurrence of some assistants. Why they should not be esteemed to be duly ordained, who are accordingly set apart by a pastor of a

¹²⁹ Urbem quam dicunt Romane, Moeliboeae, putavi
Stultus, ego huic nostrae similem, qua saepe solemus
Pastores ovium teneros depellere foetus.
Sic canibus catulos similes, sic matribus haedos
Noram; sic parvis componere magna solebam.
Verum haec tantum alias inter caput extulit urbes,
Quantum lenta solent inter viburna cupressi.—*Virgil, Buc. 1.*

single church now, I can discern no reason, after I have looked every way for it. Let something be assigned which will make an essential difference herein; otherwise they that judge such *ordinations* here, and in other reformed churches, to be nullities, will hereby declare all the ordinations in the ancient church for three or four hundred years, to be null and void, and must own the dismal consequences that ensue thereof. They that will have no ordinations but such as are performed by one who has many churches under him, maintain a novelty never known nor dreamt of in the ancient churches, while their state was tolerable. They may as well say the ancient church had never a bishop (if their interest did not hinder, all the reason they make use of in this case would lead them to it), as deny that a reformed pastor has no power to ordain, because he is not a bishop. He has Episcopal ordination, even such as the canons require, being set apart by two or three pastors at least, who are as truly diocesans as the ancient bishops, for some whole ages." ¹³⁰

2. It exposes also the futility of the doctrine of apostolical succession.

"The theory is, that each bishop, from the apostolic times, has received in his consecration a mysterious 'gift,' and also transmits to every priest in his ordination a mysterious 'gift,' indicated in the respective offices by the awful words, 'Receive the Holy Ghost;' that on this the right of priests to assume their functions, and the preternatural grace of the sacraments administered by them, depends; that bishops, once consecrated, instantly become a sort of Leyden jar of spiritual electricity, and are invested with the remarkable property of transmitting the 'gift' to others; that this has been the case from the primitive age till now; that this high gift has been incorruptibly

¹³⁰ Primitive Episcopacy, pp. 182, 183. London, 1688.

transmitted through the hands of impure, profligate, heretical ecclesiastics, as ignorant and flagitious as any of their lay contemporaries; that, in fact, these 'gifts' are perfectly irrespective of the moral character and qualifications both of bishop and priest, and reside in equal integrity in a Bonner or a Cranmer,—a parson Adams or a parson Truliber." ¹³¹

Now, we ask, have these countless multitudes of bishops all been episcopally ordained, scattered through the earth, as they were, from Britain to the remotest Indies; in cities, towns, villages, forts, military stations, monasteries, and what not? Can these mysterious 'gifts' and graces be so diffused abroad over the earth, and bandied about from hand to hand, without the hazard, amidst a thousand contingencies, that they may have fallen away, or lost their ethereal power? Has no graceless hypocrite crept in unawares among the Lord's anointed, and, with unholy hands, essayed these awful mysteries, transmitting, by uncanonized rites, this heavenly grace? Has no link been broken in this mysterious chain, stretching onward from the distant age of the apostles down to the present? Has no irregularity disturbed the succession, no taint of heresy marred the purity of its descent? Believe it who can. ¹³²

¹³¹ Edinburgh Rev., April, 1843, pp. 269, 270.

¹³² "We can imagine the perplexity of a presbyter thus cast in doubt as to whether or not he has ever had the invaluable 'gift' of apostolical succession conferred upon him. As that 'gift' is neither tangible nor visible, the subject neither of experience nor consciousness;—as it cannot be known by any 'effects' produced by it (for that mysterious efficacy which attends the administration of rites at its possessor's hands, is, like the gift which qualifies him to administer them, also invisible and intangible),—he may imagine, unhappy man! that he has been 'regenerating' infants by baptism, when he has been simply sprinkling them with water. 'What is the matter?' the spectator of his distractions might ask. 'What have you lost?' 'Lost!' would be the reply; 'I fear I have lost my apostolical succession, or rather, my misery is, that I do not know and cannot tell whether I ever had it go lose!' It is of no use here to suggest the usual questions, 'When did you see it last? When were you last conscious of possessing it?'

3. It is fatal to the claims of the "one catholic and apostolic church" of high Episcopacy.

This holy catholic church, one and indivisible, deriving divine rights in regular succession from the apostles,—where, or what is it? Who this house of Aaron, that have kept, all the while, the sacred fire of the altar, borne up and defended the tabernacle of the Lord, and guarded thus from all profane intrusion the ark of the covenant? This royal priesthood, these that were, at first, created, and have always continued, wholly a right seed,—who, or what are they? What form of error, we seriously ask, what species of delusion, what tribe of schismatics, what creature of sin, has not, at some time, found a place within this same immaculate church, as a component part of this strange Episcopal unity,—a unity only of chaos and infinite confusion? The whole system of high, exclusive Episcopacy is itself any thing but a semblance of that apostolic church to which it so proudly clings. In its doctrines, in its government, and in all the trumpery of its canons and its traditions, what has it now in common with the church, as she was in the days of the apostles? This "one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church" of prelacy,—like the famous ship of ancient Grecian story, which, by continued decay and repairs, came to be so changed at last that nothing of

What a peculiar property is that, of which, though so invaluable,—nay, on which the whole efficacy of the Christian ministry depends,—a man has no positive evidence to show whether he ever had it or not! which, if ever conferred, was conferred without his knowledge; and which, if it could be taken away, would still leave him ignorant, not only when, where, and how the theft was committed, but whether it had ever been committed or not! The sympathizing friend might, probably, remind him, that as he was not sure he had ever had it, so, *perhaps*, he still had it without knowing it. '*Perhaps!*' he would reply; 'but it is certainty I want.' 'Well,' it might be said, 'Mr. Gladstone assures you, that, on the most moderate computation, your chances are as 8000 to 1 that you have it!' 'Fish!' the distracted man would exclaim, 'what does Mr. Gladstone know about the matter?' And, truly, to *that* query we know not well what answer the friend could make."—*Edinburgh Rev.*, p. 271.



the original remained,—she has, indeed, still the same name; but all else, how changed! One by one, her every part has gone to decay, and given place to something else. And there she lies now at her moorings, with scarce a beam, or plank, or fragment of her shrouds remaining from the original and noble frame-work of her great Master-builder; and yet proudly claiming still an exclusive right to the honored name which she so much dishonors. This “catholic, apostolic church,”—pray, in what consists her identity with the church of the holy apostles?

“A real, living *unity*, and a well regulated *liberty*,” says Riddle, “characterized the early constitution of the church. But liberty was afterwards sacrificed to unity; and this unity itself degenerated into a merely external, forced, and dead *union*,—which became subservient to the purposes of oppression, and to the growth of the hierarchy.”

4. The original equality of bishops and presbyters continued to be acknowledged, from the rise of the Episcopal hierarchy down to the time of the Reformation.

The claims of prelatical Episcopacy were attacked in the fifth century with great spirit by Jerome, who denies the superiority of bishops, giving at the same time an explanation of the origin of this groundless distinction, widely different from that of divine right by apostolical authority. Several passages from this author have already been given under another head, to which we subjoin the following, with a translation, and an analysis by Dr. Mason.

“Thus he lays down *doctrine* and *fact* relative to the government of the church, in his commentary on Titus 1: 5.

“*That thou shouldest ordain presbyters in every city, as I had appointed thee.*”¹³⁴ ‘What sort of presbyters ought to

¹³³ “Qui qualis Presbyter debeat ordinari, in consequentibus disserens hoc ait: Si qui est sine crimine, unius uxoris vir,” et caetera: postea intulit, “Oportet. n. Episcopum sine crimine esse, tanquam Dei dispensatorem.” Idem est ergo Presbyter, qui et Episcopus, et antequam *diaboli*

be ordained he shows afterwards. *If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, &c.*, and then adds, *for a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God, &c.* A presbyter, therefore, is the same as a bishop: and before there were, *by the instigation of the devil*, parties in religion; and it was said among different people, *I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas*, the churches were governed by *the joint counsel of the presbyters*. But afterwards, when every one accounted those whom he baptized as belonging to himself and not to Christ, it was decreed throughout the whole world that one, chosen from among the presbyters, should be put

instinctu, studia in religione fierent, et diceretur in populis: "Ego sum Pauli, ego Apollo, ego autem Cephae." *communi Presbyterorum consilio* ecclesiae gubernabantur. Postquam vero unusquisque eos, quos baptizaverat, suos putabat esse, non Christi: *in toto orbe decretum est, ut unus de Presbyteris electus superponeretur caeteris, ad quem omnis ecclesiae cura pertineret*, et schismatum semina tollerentur. Putet aliquis non scripturarum, sed nostram, esse sententiam Episcopum et Presbyterum unum esse; et aliud aetatis, aliud esse nomen officii: relegat Apostoli ad Philipenses verba dicentis: Paulus et Timotheus servi Jesu Christi, omnibus sanctis in Christo Jesu, qui sunt Philippis, cum Episcopis et Diaconis, gratia vobis et pax, et reliqua. Philippi una est urbs Macedoniae, et certe in una civitate plures ut nuncupantur, *Episcopi esse non poterant*. Sed quia *eosdem Episcopos illo tempore* quos et *Presbyteros* appellabant, propterea indifferenter de Episcopis quasi de Presbyteris est locutus. Adhuc hoc alicui videatur ambiguum, nisi altero testimonio comprobetur. In Actibus Apostolorum scriptum est, quod cum venisset Apostolus Miletum, miserit Ephesum, et vocaverit Presbyteros ecclesiae ejusdem, quibus postea inter caetera sit locutus: *attendite vobis et omni gregi in quo vos Spiritus Sanctus posuit Episcopos, pascere Ecclesiam Domini, quam acquisivit per sanguinem suum*. Et hoc diligentius observate, quo modo *unius civitatis* Ephesi Presbyteros vocans, postea eosdem Episcopos dixerit.—Haec propterea, ut ostenderemus *apud veteres* eosdem fuisse Presbyteros quos et Episcopos. *Paulatim* vero, ut dissensionum plantaria, evellerentur, ad unum omnem sollicitudinem esse delatam.—Sicut ergo Presbyteri sciunt se ex ecclesiae consuetudine ei, qui sibi propositus fuerit, esse subjectos, ita Episcopi noverint se magis consuetudine quam dispositionis dominicae veritate, Presbyteris esse majores, HIERONYM Com: in Tit., l. 1. Opp., Tom. 4, p. 413, ed. Paris, 1693—1706. The same may be found in Rothe, p. 209.

over the rest, and that the whole care of the church should be committed to him, and the seeds of schism taken away.

“ ‘ Should any one think that this is only my own private opinion, and not the doctrine of the Scriptures, let him read the words of the apostle in his epistle to the Philippians: “Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus, which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons,” &c. Philippi, is a *single* city of Macedonia; and certainly in one city there could not be *several bishops* as they are now styled; but as they, at that time, called the very same persons bishops whom they called presbyters, the apostle has spoken without distinction of bishops as presbyters.

“ ‘ Should this matter yet appear doubtful to any one, unless it be proved by an additional testimony, it is written in the Acts of the Apostles, that when Paul had come to Miletum, he sent to Ephesus and called the presbyters of that church, and among other things said to them, “Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops.” Take particular notice, that calling the PRESBYTERS of the single city of Ephesus, he afterwards names the same persons BISHOPS.’ After further quotations from the Epistle to the Hebrews, and from Peter, he proceeds: ‘ Our intention in these remarks is to show, that, among the ancients, *presbyters and bishops were THE VERY SAME*. But that BY LITTLE AND LITTLE, that the plants of dissension might be plucked up, the whole concern was devolved upon an individual. As the presbyters, therefore, KNOW that they are subjected, BY THE CUSTOM OF THE CHURCH, to him who is set over them, so let the bishops know that they are greater than presbyters, MORE BY CUSTOM THAN BY ANY REAL APPOINTMENT OF CHRIST.’ ” 134

¹³⁴ Mason's Works, Vol. III, pp. 225—228.

Again: with the ancients, bishops and presbyters may have been one and the same, because the one denotes dignity in office, the other, superiority in age.¹³⁵

"Here is an account of the origin and progress of Episcopacy by a father whom the Episcopalians themselves admit to have been the most able and learned man of his age; and how contradictory it is to their own account the reader will be at no loss to perceive, when he shall have followed us through an analysis of its several parts.

"1. JEROME expressly denies the superiority of bishops to presbyters, by *divine right*. To prove his assertion on this head, he goes directly to the Scriptures; and argues, as the advocates of parity do, from the interchangeable titles of bishop and presbyter; from the *directions* given to them without the least intimation of difference in their authority; and from the *powers* of presbyters, undisputed in his day.

"2. JEROME states it as a *historical fact*, that this government of the churches *by presbyters alone*, continued until, for the avoiding of scandalous quarrels and schisms, it was thought expedient to *alter* it.

"3. JEROME states it as a *historical fact*, that this change in the government of the church, this creation of a superior order of ministers, took place, not at once, but *by degrees*,—'*Paulatim*,' says he, 'by little and little.'

"4. JEROME states, as *historical facts*, that the elevation of one presbyter over the others was a *human contrivance*; was not *imposed* by authority, but *crept in by custom*; and that the presbyters of his day *knew* this very well.

"5. JEROME states it as a *historical fact*, that the first bishops were made by the *presbyters themselves*, and consequently they could neither have, nor communicate any authority above that of presbyters. '*Afterwards*,' says he,

¹³⁵ Apud veteres iidem episcopi et presbuteri fuerint; quia illud nomen dignitatis, est; hoc, ætatis.—*Ep. ad Oceanum*, Tom. 4, p. 648



'to prevent schism, one was *elected* to preside over the rest.' Elected and commissioned by whom? By the *presbyters*; for he immediately gives you a broad fact which it is impossible to explain away. 'At Alexandria,' he tells you, 'from the evangelist Mark to the bishops Heraclas and Dionysius,' *i. e.*, till about the middle of the third century, 'the presbyters *always chose* one of their number, *placed him in a superior station*, and gave him the title of bishop.'

"It is inconceivable, how JEROME should tell the bishops to their faces that Christ never gave them any superiority over the presbyters; that custom was their only title; and that the presbyters were perfectly aware of this, unless he was supported by facts which they were unable to contradict. Their silence under his challenges is more than a presumption that they found it wise to let him alone."¹³⁶

The testimony of Jerome affords an authentic record of the *change* that was introduced into the government of the church, and the causes that led on to this change, by which the original constitution was wholly subverted. It was in his day a known and acknowledged fact, that prelacy had no authority from Christ or his apostles,—no divine right to its high pretensions. "The presbyters know that they are subject to their bishops," not by divine right or apostolical succession, but "*by the custom of the church.*" And to the same effect, is the admission of his contemporary, Augustin, the renowned bishop of Hippo, which we give in the words of a distinguished prelate of the church of England, as quoted by Aynton.¹³⁷ "The office of a bishop is above the office of a priest [presbyter], not by the authority of Scripture, but after the names of honor, which through the custom of the church have now obtained."¹³⁸ Episcopacy, according to this eminent and

¹³⁶ Mason's Works, Vol. III, pp. 233—251.

¹³⁷ Jewel, Defence of his Apology, pp. 122, 123.

¹³⁸ Quamquam secundum honorum vocabula quae jam ecclesiae usus obtinuit, episcopatus presbyterio major sit; tamen in multis rebus Augustinus Hieronymo minor est.—*Ep. ad Hier.*, 19, alias 83, § 33, Op., Tom 2, col. 153.

ancient prelate, is the result of custom, without any scriptural warrant whatever.

This is in accordance, also, with the authority of Hilary, which has been given above. What a note of triumphant exultation would prelacy raise, did all antiquity offer half as much in defence of her lofty claims as these fathers allege against them.

The most distinguished of the Greek fathers, again, concur with those of the Latin church, in their views of the identity of bishops and presbyters. Chrysostom, A. D. 407, in commenting upon the apostles' salutation of the bishops of Philippi, exclaims, "How is this? Were there many bishops in one city? By no means; but he calls the presbyters by this name; for at that time both were so called. The bishop was also called *διάκονος*, *servant, minister*; for, writing to Timothy, who was bishop, he says, 'make full proof of thy *διακονίαν*, *ministry*.' He also instructs him to lay hands, as a bishop, suddenly on no man. And again: 'which was given thee by the laying on of the *hands of the presbytery*.' But presbyters [as such] did not lay hands on the bishop. Again, writing to Titus, he says, 'for this cause I left thee in Crete, that thou shouldst ordain presbyters in every city as I had commanded thee.' 'If any one be blameless, the husband of one wife.' This he says of a *bishop*; for he immediately proceeds to add: 'a *bishop* must be blameless, as the steward of God, not self-willed.' Wherefore, as I said, presbyters were anciently called bishops and stewards of Christ, and bishops were called presbyters. For this reason, even now, many bishops speak of their *fellow-presbyter* and *fellow-minister*; and finally, the name of *bishop and presbyter is given to each indiscriminately*." ¹³⁹ Again: with reference to Paul, in

¹³⁹ Συν επισκόποις καὶ διακόνους, τί τοῦτο; μᾶς πόλεως πολλοὶ ἐπίσκοποι ἦσαν; Οὐδαμῶς· ἀλλὰ τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους οὕτως ἐκάλεσε· τότε γὰρ τέως ἐκοινῶνουν τοῖς ὀνόμασι, καὶ



1 Tim. 3: 8, Chrysostom says, that after discoursing of bishops, and showing what they should possess, and from what they ought to abstain, he proceeds immediately to speak of deacons, passing by the order of presbyters. Why so? Because there is not much distinction between them and bishops. For they also are set for the instruction and government of the church. What he had said of bishops was also applicable to presbyters; they have the superiority merely in the imposition of hands, and in this respect alone take precedence of the presbyters.¹⁴⁰ This was said in relation to the time then present. Even at this late period this eminent prelate recognizes only a trifling distinction between bishop and presbyter.

διάκονος ὁ ἐπίσκοπος ἐλέγετο. Διὰ τοῦτο γράφων καὶ Τιμοθέῳ ἔλεγε· τὴν διακονίαν σου πληροφόρησον, ἐπισκόπῳ ὄντι. ὅτι γὰρ ἐπίσκοπος ἦν, φησὶ πρὸς αὐτὸν χεῖρας ταχέως μὴδεν ἐπιτίθει· καὶ πάλιν· ὃ ἐδόθη σοι μετὰ ἐπιθέσεως τῶν χειρῶν τοῦ πρεσβυτερίου· οὐκ ἂν δὲ πρεσβύτεροι ἐπίσκοπον ἐχειροτόνησαν. Καὶ πάλιν πρὸς Τίτον γράφων φησὶ· τοῦτου χάριν κατέλιπόν σε ἐν Κρήτῃ, ἵνα καταστήσης κατὰ πόλιν πρεσβυτέρους, ὡς ἐγὼ σοι διεταξάμην· εἴ τις ἀνέγκλητος, μιᾶς γυναικὸς ἀνὴρ· ὃ περὶ τοῦ ἐπισκόπου φησί. Καὶ εἰπὼν ταῦτα εὐθέως ἐπήγαγε· δεῖ γὰρ τὸν ἐπίσκοπον ἀνέγκλητον εἶναι, ὡς Θεοῦ οἰκονόμον, μὴ αὐθαδῆ. ^ο Ὅπερ οὖν ἔφη, καὶ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι τὸ παλαιὸν ἐκαλοῦντο ἐπίσκοποι καὶ διάκονοι τοῦ Χριστοῦ, καὶ οἱ ἐπίσκοποι πρεσβύτεροι. ὁθεν καὶ νῦν πολλοὶ συμπρεσβυτέρῳ ἐπίσκοποι γράφουσι, καὶ συνδιακόνῳ. λοιπὸν δὲ τὸ ἰδιάζον ἐκάστῳ ἀπονενέμεται ὄνομα, ὁ ἐπίσκοπος· καὶ ὁ πρεσβύτερος.—Chrysostom, *Ep. ad Phil.*, Tom. 11, p. 194.

¹⁴⁰ Διαλεγόμενος περὶ ἐπισκόπον καὶ χαρακτηρίσας αὐτοὺς, καὶ εἰπὼν τίνα μὲν ἔχειν, τίνων δὲ ἀπέχεσθαι χρὴ, καὶ τὸ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων τάγμα ἀφείλς, εἰς τοὺς διακόνους μετεπήδησε. Τί δήποτε; ὅτι οὐ πολὺ μέσον αὐτῶν καὶ τῶν ἐπισκόπων. Καὶ γὰρ καὶ αὐτοὶ διδασκαλίαν εἶσιν ἀναδεδεγμένοι καὶ προστασίαν τῆς ἐκκλησίας· καὶ ὃ περὶ ἐπισκοπῶν εἶπε, ταῦτα καὶ πρεσβυτέροις ἀρμόττει· τῇ γὰρ χειροτονίᾳ μόνῃ ὑπερβεβήκασι καὶ τούτῳ μόνον δοκοῦσι· πλεονεκτεῖν τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους.—*Ibid.*, *Ep. ad Tim.* 1, Tom. 11, p. 604.

Theodoret, also, who lived only a few years later than Chrysostom, repeats substantially the same sentiments. In relation to the salutation of Paul to the Philippians, c. 1: 1, he says, "the apostle addresses himself to the priesthood and to the saints who are under them, in which term he includes all who had received baptism. But he calls the presbyters bishops; for they had, at that time the same names, as we learn from the history of the Acts of the Apostles." The writer then proceeds to remark upon the *presbyters* of Ephesus, Acts 20: 17, who in verse 28 are called *bishops*. From this he goes on to speak of the instructions given to Titus, who was left in Crete, to ordain *presbyters* in every city; but on being directed what persons to choose, he is told that "a *bishop* must be blameless," &c. He then adverts to the fact, that the apostle speaks only of the two orders of *bishops* and *deacons*, without any mention of presbyters; and of the impossibility of supposing that several bishops could have borne rule in the same city. After this, he proceeds to say; "so that it is evident that he denominates the *presbyters* *bishops*." ¹⁴¹ This sentiment he repeats in remarking

¹⁴¹ Πᾶσι τὰ κατ' αὐτὸν ἐπιστέλλει, τοῖς δὲ τῆς ἱερουσῶνης ἡξιωμένοις καὶ τοῖς ἀπὸ τούτων ποιμαινομένοις. ἁγίους γὰρ τοὺς τοῦ βαπτίσματος ἁξιωθέντας ὠνόμασεν, ἐπισκόπους δὲ τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους καλεῖ, ἀμφοτέρω γὰρ εἶχον κατ' ἐκεῖνον τὸν καιρὸν τὰ ὀνόματα. Καὶ τοῦτο ἡμᾶς καὶ ἡ τῶν Πράξεων ἱστορία διδάσκει. Εἰρηκῶς γὰρ ὁ μακάριος Λουκᾶς, ὡς εἰς τὴν Μίλητον τοὺς Ἐφεσίων μετεμέμψατο πρεσβυτέρους ὁ Θεὸς ἀπόστολος, λέγει καὶ τὰ πρὸς αὐτοὺς εἰρημένα προσέχετε γὰρ φησιν ἑαυτοῖς καὶ παντὶ ποιμνίῳ, ἐν ᾧ ὑμεῖς ἔθετο τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἐπισκόπους, ποιμαίνειν τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ τοὺς αὐτοὺς καὶ πρεσβυτέρους καὶ ἐπισκόπους ὠνόμασεν. Οὕτω καὶ ἐν τῇ πρὸς τὸν μακάριον Τιμόν ἐπιστολῇ διὰ τοῦτο κατέλιπόν σε ἐν Κρήτῃ, ἵνα καταστήσῃς κατὰ πόλιν πρεσβυτέρους, ὡς ἐγὼ σοι διευτάξω. Καὶ εἰπὼν ὁποίους εἶναι χρὴ τοὺς χειροτονουμένους ἐπήγαγε· δεῖ γὰρ τὸν ἐπίσκοπον ἀνέγκλητον εἶναι, ὡς Θεοῦ δικόνον. Καὶ ἐνταῦθα δὲ δῆλον τοῦτο πεποίηκε· τοῖς



upon Phil. 2: 25; where he says, that "those who, in the beginning of the epistle, are called bishops, evidently belonged to the grade of the presbytery." The passage is given entire in the margin.¹⁴² Again, 1 Tim. 3: 1, he takes occasion to say, that the apostle "calls the presbyter a *bishop*, as we have had occasion to show in our commentary on the epistle to the Philippians."¹⁴³

The following commentary of the Greek scholiast, of a later date, shows that these views were still retained in the Eastern church. "Inasmuch as the custom of the New Testament especially, of calling bishops presbyters, and presbyters bishops, seems to be silently neglected by many, it may be shown from Acts 20: 17; and from the epistle to Titus; and again, from that to the Philippians; and, yet again, from the first epistle to Timothy. From the Acts the argument is as follows:—'From Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus, and called the *presbyters* of the church.' He called them not bishops; but farther on, he says, 'Over which the Holy Ghost hath made you *bishops* to feed the church.'—From the epistle to Titus, 'Having established *presbyters* throughout the churches as I commanded you.'—From the epistle to the Philippians, 'To those that are in Philippi with the *bishop* and deacons.' From the epistle

γὰρ ἐπισκόποις τοὺς διακόνους συνέζευξε, τῶν πρεσβυτέρων οὐ ποιησάμενος μνήμην· ἄλλως τε οὐδὲ οἶόν τε ἦν πολλοὺς ἐπισκόπους μίαν πόλιν ποιμαίνειν· ὥς εἶναι δῆλον διὰ τοὺς μὲν πρεσβυτέρους ἐπισκόπους ὠνόμασε.—*Theodoret, Ep. ad Phil.*, p. 445, seq. Tom. 3, ed. Halens.

¹⁴² Πολλὰ καὶ τούτου (Eraphroditus) κατορθώματα διεξῆλθεν (Paulus), οὐκ ἀδελφὸν μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ συνεργὸν καὶ συστρατιώτην ἀποκαλέσας. Ἀπόστολον δὲ αὐτὸν κέκληκεν αὐτῶν ὡς τὴν ἐπιμέλειαν αὐτῶν ἐμπειπιστευμένον· ὥς εἶναι δῆλον διὰ ὑπὸ τούτου ἐτέλουν οἱ ἐν τῷ προοιμίῳ κληθέντες ἐπίσκοποι, τοῦ πρεσβυτερίου δηλονότι τὴν τάξιν πληροῦντες.—*Ibid.*, *Ep. ad Tīm.*, p. 459, Tom. 3.

¹⁴³ Ἐπίσκοπον δὲ ἐνταῦθα τὸν πρεσβύτερον λέγει, ὡς τὴν πρὸς Φιλιππησίους ἐπιστολὴν ἐρμηνεύοντες ἀπεδείξαμεν.—*Ibid.*, p. 652.

to Timothy the same may be inferred by analogy, when he says, 'If a man desire the office of a *bishop* he desireth a good work;' 'A bishop must be blameless,' &c."¹⁴⁴

This scholiast has but hinted at the argument from these passages, to which he refers, but he has said enough to show that the doctrine of the ministerial parity of bishops and presbyters was still maintained during the middle ages, in the Eastern church, and justly defended on the authority of the Scriptures.

Elias, archbishop of Crete, A. D. 787, asserts the identity of bishops and presbyters; and, in commenting upon Gregory Nazianzen, remarks, that this bishop, in the fifth century, was accustomed to denominate presbyters, *bishops*, *antistites*, making no distinction between them;—a circumstance which this scholiast has noticed in many passages from Gregory.¹⁴⁵

It is truly remarkable how long, and how distinctly, these views of the original sameness of bishops and presbyters were retained on the church. Isidorus Hispalensis, bishop of Seville in Spain, in the seventh century, and

¹⁴⁴ 'Επειδὴ λανθάνει τοὺς πολλοὺς ἡ συνήθεια, μαλιστα τῆς καινῆς διαθήκης, τοὺς ἐπισκόπους πρεσβυτέρους ὀνομάζουσα καὶ τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους ἐπισκόπους, σημειωτέον τοῦτο ἐντεῦθεν καὶ ἐκ τῆς πρὸς Τίτον ἐπιστολῆς, ἔτι δὲ καὶ πρὸς Φιλιππησίους καὶ ἐκ τῆς πρὸς Τιμόθεον πρώτης. 'Εκ μὲν οὖν τῶν Πράξεων ἐντεῦθεν ἐστὶ πεισθῆναι περὶ τοῦτου, γέγραπται γὰρ οὕτως. 'Εκ δὲ τῆς Μιλήτιου πέμψας εἰς Ἐφεσον μετεκαλέσατο τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους τῆς ἐκκλησίας. Καὶ οὐκ εἴρηκε τοὺς ἐπισκόπους, εἶτα ἐπιφέρει· ἐν ᾧ ὁμᾶς τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἔθετο ἐπισκόπους, ποιμαίνειν τὴν ἐκκλησίαν. 'Εκ δὲ τῆς πρὸς Τίτον ἐπιστολῆς. Καταστήσεις κατὰ πόλιν πρεσβυτέρους, ὡς ἐγὼ σοι διεταξάμεν. 'Εκ δὲ τῆς πρὸς Φιλιππησίους. Τοῖς οὖσιν ἐν Φιλίπποις συνεπισκόποις καὶ διακόνους. Οἶμαι δὲ, διτι ἐκ τῆς προτέρας πρὸς Τιμόθεον ἀναλογισάμενος τοῦτο ἐκλαβεῖν· εἴ τις γάρ, φησι, τῆς ἐπισκοπῆς ὀρέγεται, καλοῦ ἔργου ἐπιθυμεῖ. δεῖ οὖν τὸν ἐπίσκοπον ἀνεπίληπτον εἶναι.—Cited by Rothe from Salmasius, *Episcop. et Presb.*, p. 13.

¹⁴⁵ *Greg. Naz.*, Tom. 2, p. 830. Ed. Colon. 1590. Also Ed. Basil. 1571, pp. 262, 264.



one of the most learned men of that age, copies with approbation the authority of Jerome given above, as an expression of his own sentiments. He may accordingly be regarded as expressing the sentiments of the Western church at this time.

The views of the church at Alexandria, in the tenth century, have already been expressed in the extract from Eutychius given above.

Bernaldus Constantiensis, about A. D. 1088, a learned monk, and a zealous defender of Gregory VII, after citing Jerome, continues: "Inasmuch, therefore, as bishops and presbyters were anciently the same, without doubt they had power to loose and to bind, and *to do other acts which are now the special prerogatives of the bishop*. But after the presbyters began to be restricted by Episcopal pre-eminence, what was formerly lawful for them became unlawful. Ecclesiastical authority having delegated such prerogatives to the prelates alone."¹⁴⁶

Even pope Urban II, 1091, says,—“We regard deacons and presbyters as belonging to the sacred order, since these are the only orders which the primitive church is said to have had. For these only have we apostolical authority.”¹⁴⁷

Gratian again, a benedictine, eminent for his learning and talents, a century later, adopts all the passages cited above from Jerome, ad Tit. 1.¹⁴⁸

Nicholas Tudeschus, archbishop of Panorma, about A.

¹⁴⁶ Quum igitur presbyteri et episcopi antiquitus, idem fuisse legantur etiam eandem ligandi atque solvendi potestatem, et alia nunc episcopis specialia, habuisse non dubitantur. Postquam autem presbyteri ab episcopali excellentia cohibiti sunt, coepit eis non licere quod licuit, videlicet quod ecclesiastica auctoritas solis pontificibus exequendum delegavit.—*De Presbyterorum officio tract.* in Monmentorum res Allemannorum illustrant. S. Blas, 1792, 4to. Tom. 2, 384 seq.

¹⁴⁷ Sacros autem ordines ducimus diaconatum et presbyteratum. Hos siquidem solos primitiva legitur ecclesia habuisse; super his solum preceptum habemus apostoli.—*Conc. Benerent*, an. 1090, can. 1.

¹⁴⁸ (Dist. XCV., c. 5.) Epist. ad Evangel., (Dist. XCIII., c. 24.) and Isidori Hist., (Dist. XXI., c. 1)

D. 1428, says:—"Formerly *presbyters* governed the church in common, and *ordained the clergy*."¹⁴⁹

It is perhaps still more remarkable that even the papal canonist, Jo. Paul Launcelot, A. D. 1570, introduces the passage of Jerome without any attempt to refute it.¹⁵⁰

Thus through all the middle ages during the proudest ascendancy of prelatical power, the doctrine of the original equality of bishops and presbyters, remained an acknowledged sentiment in the Roman Catholic church, attested by a succession of the most learned of her clergy.

Gieseler remarks, "That the distinction between the divine and the ecclesiastical appointment, *institutio*, was of less importance in the middle ages than in the modern catholic church, and this view of the original identity of bishops and presbyters, was of no practical importance. It was not till after the Reformation that it was attacked. Michael de Medina, about A. D. 1570, does not hesitate to assert that those fathers were essentially heretics; but adds, that out of respect for these fathers, this heresy in them is not to be condemned. Bellarmine declares this a 'very inconsiderate sentiment.' Thenceforth all Catholics, as well as English Episcopalians, maintain an original difference between bishop and presbyter."¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁹ Super prima parte Primi, cap. 5, ed. Lugdun, 1543, fol. 1126. Olim presbyteri in commune regebant ecclesiam et ordinabant sacerdotes.

¹⁵⁰ Institutt. juris Canon., Lib. 1, Tit. 21, § 3.

¹⁵¹ Comp. especially *Petavii* de ecclesiastica hierarchia Lib. 5, and dissertatt. theologic. Lib. 1, in his theolog. dogmat. Tom. 4, p. 164. On the other side, *Walonis Messalini* (Claud. Salmasii) diss. de episcopis et presbyteris. Lugd. Bat. 1641, 8vo. *Dav. Blondelli* apologia pro sententia Hieronymi de episcopis et presbyteris. Amstelod. 1616, 4to. Against these *Henr. Hammondus* dissertatt. IV., quibus episcopatus jura ex sacra scriptura et prima antiquitate adstruuntur. Lond. 1651. The controversy was long continued. On the side of the Episcopalians, *Jo. Pearson*, *Guil. Beveridge*, *Henr. Dodwell*, *Jos. Bingham*, *Jac. Usserius*. On that of the Presbyterians, *Jo. Dallaeus*, *Camp. Vitringa*; also the Lutherans, *Joach. Hildebrand*, *Just. Henn. Boehmer*, *Jo. Franc. Buddeus*, *Christ. Math. Pfaff*, etc., comp. *Jo. Phil. Gabler* de episcopis primae ecclesiae Christ. eorumque origine diss. Jenae, 1805, 4to.

In view of the whole course of the argument, then, have we not good and sufficient reasons, for refusing the Episcopal claim of an original distinction between bishops and presbyters, as a groundless assumption? It has been disowned by prelates, bishops, and learned controversialists, and commentators, both in the Eastern and Western churches, of every age down to the sixteenth century. It was unknown to those early fathers, who lived nearest to the apostolical age, some of whom were the immediate successors of the apostles. It was wholly unauthorized by the apostles themselves. On the contrary, they assign to bishops and presbyters the same specific duties. They require in both the same qualifications. They address them by the same names and titles interchangeably and indiscriminately. Are bishops and presbyters, not then, one and the same?—the same in office, in honor, in power, in all the prerogatives, rights and privileges of those pastors and teachers, to whom the apostles, at their decease, resigned the churches, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ? Or must we believe that the presbyter after all is a mere subaltern of the bishop; ordained of God to perform only the humbler offices of the ministry, and to supply the bishop's lack of service? Must we believe, moreover, that the bishop, this honored and most important dignitary of the church, in whom all clerical grace centres, and through whose hands alone, all that authority and power has been transmitted, which is essential to the perpetuity of the ministry and the just administration of the ordinances,—that this important functionary is but a nameless nondescript, known by no title, represented by no person or class of persons in the apostolical churches, and having no distinct, specific duties prescribed in the New Testament? All this may be asserted and re-affirmed, as a thousand times it has been; but it can never be proved. It must

be received, if received at all, with blind credulity; not on reasonable evidence. Verily this vaunting of high-church Episcopacy is an insult to reason;—a quiet complacent assumption, which makes “implicit faith the highest demonstration.” If any such assertor of these absurd pretensions finds himself disquieted, at any time, by the renewed remonstrances of Scripture, truth and reason, to repel these impertinent intruders, and restore the equilibrium of his mind, he has only to “shake his head and tell them how superior after all is faith to logic!”

The foregoing chapters give us an outline of that ecclesiastical organization which the churches received from the hands of the apostles, and which was continued in the primitive church for some time succeeding the apostolic age. The government is altogether popular. The sovereign authority is vested in the people. From them all the laws originate; through them they are administered. The government guarantees to all its members the enjoyment of equal rights and privileges, secures to them the right of private judgment, and admits of their intervention in all its public affairs. It extends to all the right of suffrage. Each community is an independent sovereignty, subject to no other ecclesiastical jurisdiction contrary to their own free-will. Their confessions, formularies and terms of communion are formed according to their own interpretation of the laws of God; and if the deportment of any one is subject to impeachment, the case is decided by the impartial verdict of his brethren. Their officers are few; and their ministers, equal in rank and in power, are the servants, not the lords, of the people. The entire polity of the apostolical and primitive churches was framed on the principles, not of a monarchical hierarchy, but of a popular and elective government. In one word, it was a republican government administered with republican simplicity.



This exhibition of the first organization of the Christian church suggests a variety of reflections, some of which we must be permitted, before closing this view of the apostolical and primitive church, to suggest to the consideration of the reader.

REMARKS.

1. The primitive church was organized, purely a religious society.

It had for its object only the great interests of morality and religion. It interfered not with the secular or private pursuits of its members, except so far as they relate to the great end for which the church was formed,—the promotion of pure and undefiled religion. Whenever the Christian church has let itself down to mingle or interfere with the secular pursuits of men, the only result has been her own disgrace and the dishonor of the great cause which she was set to defend.

2. It employed only *moral means* for the accomplishment of religious ends.

The apostles sought by kind and tender entreaty to reclaim the wandering. They taught the church to do the same; and to separate the unworthy from their communion. But they gave no countenance to the exercise of arbitrary authority over the conduct or the consciences of men. They neither allowed themselves, nor the church, to exercise any other authority than that of the word of God and of Christ, enforced by instruction, by counsel, and by admonition. They had ever before them the beautiful image of a religious fraternity, united together in the bonds of faith and mutual affection, and striving together in purity and in love for the promotion of godliness becoming Christian men.

3. This church was at first free from all entanglement with the state.

It had no affinity to the existing forms of state government, nor any connection with them. It vested the church power in the only appropriate source of all social power,—*in the people*. It is only in this voluntary system, in which neither state power nor church power can interfere with the religious convictions of men, that the church of Christ finds an asylum for the preservation of its purity and the exercise of its legitimate influence.

But the church soon began to be assimilated to the form of the existing civil governments, and in the end a "hierarchy of bishops, metropolitans, and patriarchs arose, corresponding to the graduated rank of the civil administration. Ere-long the Roman bishop assumed pre-eminence above all others."¹⁵³ United with the civil authority in its interests, assimilated to that power in its form of government, and secularized in spirit, the church, under Constantine and his successors, put off its high and sacred character, to become a part of the machinery of state government. It first truckled to the low arts of state policy, and then, with insatiable ambition, assumed at last the supreme control of all power, human and divine.

4. It is another advantage of the system of the primitive church, that it was fitted for any form of government, and for any state of society.

Voluntary and simple in their organization, entirely removed from all connection with the civil government, with no confederate relations among themselves, and seeking only by the pure precepts of religion to persuade men in every condition to lead quiet and holy lives, these Christian societies were adapted to any state of society and any form of government. This primitive Christianity commended itself, with equal facility, to the rich and the poor, the learned and the unlearned, the high and the low; whether it addressed itself to the soldier, the fisherman or

¹⁵³ Ranke's Hist. of the Popes, Eng. Trans., Vol. I, p. 29.



the peasant, it equally suited their condition. It gathered into its communion converts from every form of government, of every species of superstition, and of every condition in life, and by its wholesome truths and simple rites trained them up for eternal life. Stern and uncompromising in its purity and simplicity, it stood aloof from all other forms, both of government and of religion. It neither sought favor from the paganism of the Gentile, nor the prejudice of the Jew; nor yielded compliance to the despotism of Rome, or the democracy of Greece, while it could live and flourish under either government and in any state of society. Can the same be said with equal propriety of Episcopacy? Are its complicated forms and ceremonies, its robes and vestments, its rituals, and all its solemn pomp, equally adapted to every state of religious feeling, or suited alike to refined society, and to rude and rustic life? In its complicated forms of government, are all its grades of office, its diocesan and metropolitan confederacies, and its absolute, monarchical powers, equally congenial to every kind of civil government?

5. It subjected the clergy to salutary restraints by bringing them, in their official character, under the watch of the church.

The apostles, as we have already seen, recognized their own accountability to the church. This continued afterwards to be an established principle in the primitive church. The consciousness that their whole life was open to the judicial inspection of those to whom they ministered, and by whom they were most intimately known, could not fail to create in the clergy a salutary circumspection, the restraints of which an independent ministry under another system can never feel.

6. It served to guard them also against the workings of an unholy ambition, a thirst for office, and the love of power.

This thought is necessarily implied in the preceding, but it is of such importance that it deserves a distinct consideration. Those disgraceful contests for preferment, the recital of which crowds the page of ancient history, belong to a later and a different ecclesiastical polity.

7. It was adapted also to guard the clergy against a mercenary spirit.

The vast revenue of a church-establishment, and the princely annuities of its incumbents, offer an incentive to this sordid passion which Paul in his poverty could never have felt, and which none can ever feel, who receive no more than a humble competence, as a voluntary offering at the hands of those for whom they labor.

8. The system was well suited to guard the church from the evils of a sectarian spirit.

In the church of Christ were Jews, jealous for the law of their fathers. There were also Greeks, who, independent of the Mosaic economy, had received the gospel and become Christians, without being Jews in spirit. Had now the church assumed the form of a national establishment, with its prescribed articles of faith, its ritual, agenda, &c., it is difficult to conceive how the opposing views of these different parties could have been harmonized. The older apostles, with the Jews, might have maintained with greater firmness their Jewish prejudice as they observed the pure direction of Christianity in Paul and his Gentile converts, who again might have been more determined in their opposition to a Judaizing spirit. So that these germinating differences might have ended in an irreconcilable opposition. As it was, this disturbing influence was strongly manifested in all the churches, so that it required all the wisdom and influence of the apostles to unite their Christian converts in an organization so simple as that which they did establish.

9. It left the apostles and pastors free to pursue their great work, without let or hindrance from ecclesiastical authority or partizan zeal.

It allowed free scope for the fervid zeal of the early promulgators of the gospel of Christ, and permitted them to range at large in their missionary tours for the conversion of men, unrestrained by the rules of ecclesiastical authority or canonical laws. An explanation, given and received in the spirit of mutual confidence, reconciled the brethren whose prejudice was excited by the preaching of Peter to the Gentiles. The unhappy division between Paul and Barnabas ended in the furtherance of the gospel, both being at liberty, notwithstanding this sinful infirmity, to prosecute their labors for the salvation of men without being arrested by the bans of the hierarchy, or trammelled by ecclesiastical jealousy lest the souls, whom one or the other should win to Christ, might chance not to have been canonically converted.

10. The order of the primitive church was calculated to preserve peace and harmony among the clergy.

One in rank and power, and holding the tenure of their office at the will of their people, they had few temptations, comparatively, to engage in strife one with another for preferment; or to repine at the advancement of one of their number, who by his superior qualifications was promoted to some commanding post of usefulness above them.

I know indeed that Jerome assigns the origin of Episcopacy to the ambitious contentions of the clergy in the primitive church; as though this were an expedient to heal their divisions. Now, if this be so, I have only to say, that the remedy proved to be infinitely worse than the evil which it would cure. All the ecclesiastical historians of antiquity most fully and strongly attest the fact, that after the rise of diocesan Episcopacy, and the establishment of the various grades of the hierarchy, the spirit of

faction rose high among the clergy. Insatiable ambition possessed all orders among the priesthood, raging like a pestilence through their several ranks. The age of Constantine and his successors, within which the system of prelacy was matured, was pre-eminently the age of clerical ambition.

"In the age we speak of, which seems too justly styled *ambitionis saeculum*, the age of ambition,—though those, whose designs agree with the humor of it, have esteemed it most imitable—scarce any in the church could keep their own, that had any there greater than themselves; some bishops, and not only the presbyters found it so, the *great* still encroaching upon those, whose *lower* condition made them obnoxious to the ambition and usurpation of the more potent.

"In that unhappy time, what struggling was there in bishops of all sorts for more greatness and larger power! What tugging at councils and court for these purposes!"¹⁵³

Socrates, the ecclesiastical historian, A. D. 439, alleges that he has intermingled the history of the *wars* of those times, *as a relief* to the reader, that he may not be continually detained with the ambitious contentions, *φιλονικία*, of the bishops, and their plots and counter-plots against each other.¹⁵⁴ But more of this hereafter.

11. It was also happily suited to bless the people with an useful and efficient ministry.

Select a few from among their ministerial brethren, exalt them to the high places of Episcopal power, encircle them with the mitre, the robe, and all the "paraphernalia of pontifical dignity," enthrone them securely in authority, settle them quietly in their palaces to enjoy the ample benefices of an irresponsible office; and, however gratify-

¹⁵³ Clarkson's Primitive Episcopacy, pp. 142, 143.

¹⁵⁴ Introduction to Lib. 5.

ing may be the favors which you have bestowed, you have done little to advance their ministerial usefulness.

Besides, the days of a bishop's activity and usefulness soon pass away, but his *office* still remains. Though passed into "the sear and yellow leaf of age," he bears his blushing honors still upon him. In the circumstances of the case, indeed, he can scarcely be expected to resign his office; neither can he, it would seem, even if he would, "when once made bishop, and when he has thus received the indelible, invisible mark of Episcopal grace, he is absolutely shut up to the necessity of continuing in office, however unworthy or unfit he may prove or find himself to be."¹⁵⁵

What an incumbrance to the ministrations of the truth as it is in Jesus; again, are the forms, and rites, and observances of the Episcopal service. Here are *thirty-six* festivals, and *one hundred* fasts, annually claiming the attention of the preacher. Then there is the "holy catholic church;" the mysteries of the sacraments, baptismal regeneration, and the awful presence in the elements of the eucharist; the holy order of bishops; "the ascending orders of the hierarchy;" "the most excellent liturgy;" the validity of Episcopal ordination, "covenant mercies," and I know not what, all pressing their claims on the attention of the Episcopal minister, and demanding a place in the ministrations of the pulpit.

¹⁵⁵ Constit. and Canons of Prot. Epis. Church, pp. 301, 303. "So far," says Dr. Hawks, "as our research has extended, this law is without a precedent in the history of the Christian church. We may be mistaken, but we believe that ours is the first church in Christendom, that ever legislated for the express purpose of preventing Episcopal resignations; for this canon prescribes so many restrictions, that the obstacles render it almost impossible for a bishop to lay down his jurisdiction. The matter is one which the practice of the church has heretofore left to be settled between God and the conscience of the bishops; and it may well be questioned, whether it be not best in all cases, there to leave it."—*Cited from Smyth's Eccl. Republicanism*, p. 167.

Add to these the sublimer doctrines of prelacy. Let him begin to rave about apostolic succession, divine right, postures, attitudes, "wax candles, altar-cloths, chaplets, crosses, crucifixes, and mummary of all kinds,"—and can it be difficult to conjecture what place the great doctrine of Christ and him crucified must have in the teachings of such a ministry, or what efficacy it may have in winning souls to Christ by the preaching of the truth as it is in Jesus? So it was with the ancient church. "No one can read the writings of the fathers, without feeling that they gradually became more intent on the circumstantialia of religion than on the essence of it; more solicitous about the modes in which religious duties should be performed, than about the spirit of them. It is all over with religion when this is the case."

But how different from all this was the ministry of Christ and of the apostles. Armed with the panoply of heaven,—the word of God alone, the sword of the Spirit,—the first promulgators of the Christian religion went forth, conquering and to conquer. By the simple instrumentality of the word, mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds, they quickly spread the triumphs of the cross through every land, and carried their conquests up even to the very throne of the Cæsars. Be ours a religion that creates and enjoys such a ministry.

12. This primitive system serves to make an efficient laity.

Instead of excluding them from the concerns of the church, like many other forms of church government, and requiring of them chiefly to attend to their forms of worship, and pay their taxes, this primitive system of ecclesiastical polity devolves upon the members of the church the duties of discipline, and the care of the church. It trains them to live and to care for the interests of religion. It quickens their graces, by calling them into habitual exercise. It gives an efficient practical character to their



religion. Look to the Moravian brethren, or to the churches of America which have the closest resemblance to this primitive organization. Observe them in the private walks of life. Look at their efficiency in missionary operations, their noble charities, and their generous labors in every department of Christian benevolence. They are not merely devout worshippers within the church, and decent moralists without, but notoriously, eminently, intelligent, efficient, liberal. They *serve* God as well as worship him. Not content merely to cultivate the private virtues of the Christian, the laity have the habit of counselling and acting for the church and for their fellow-men, which gives to their religion an enterprising, practical, business character. An absolute government, on the other hand, whether civil or religious, which separates the people from all participation in its administration, forms in them the habit of living and caring only for themselves; and the result is a retiring, negative character, a servile, selfish spirit. The impress of a despotic government upon the character of a people is as clear as the light of the sun in the heavens; and, so long as like causes produce similar effects, the results of a spiritual despotism may be seen in an inactive, inefficient laity. Noble examples to the contrary there may be, just as in all the private walks of life there may be individuals of generous impulses and lofty aspirations, who burst away from the thralldom of their condition, and rise superior to the enervating, depressing influences, which act disastrously upon men of ordinary minds. But the general character of any people is moulded and formed by the government, civil and religious, under which they live.

Of drones, monks, sinecurists, and cloistered Christians even, content in seclusion to cultivate merely the retired virtues of private life, careless of a world lying in wickedness, so they may themselves but safely be raised to heaven at last,—of all such the church has had enough. But the

true church of Christ demands men who shall not forget to do good, and to communicate to all men as they may have opportunity.¹⁵⁶ Her present emergencies call for *working-men*, in the best sense of the phrase; men who shall live, not unto themselves but for their Lord and Master, and for the souls which he has redeemed by his own blood. And that is the best religious system, which trains, in the happiest manner and in greatest numbers, such working-men for the church of Christ.

"When every good Christian, thoroughly acquainted with all those glorious privileges of sanctification and adoption, which render him more sacred than any dedicated altar or element, shall be restored to his right in the church, and not excluded from such place of spiritual government as his Christian abilities and his approved good life in the eye and testimony of the church shall prefer him to, this and nothing sooner will open his eyes to a wise and true valuation of himself, which is so requisite and high a point of Christianity, and will stir him up

¹⁵⁶ The superior liberality and enterprise of those religious denominations now under consideration, is noticed by a correspondent in a late number of the Episcopal Recorder.

"O, that we had the zeal of some other denominations of Christians, against whom we too often boast ourselves, but whose liberality puts our penuriousness to open shame. It is but a few days since a single firm in this city, consisting of three members, gave \$15,000 to sustain the Presbyterian Theological Seminary of New York, yet Bishop McIlvaine, wanting little more than this same sum, to relieve one of the noblest of the institutions of our church, has to beg from city to city, from rich to poor, and is at this moment in anxious suspense whether his mission may not fail, because men are lovers of their own selves, instead of being constrained by the love of Christ to give freely of what they have so freely received. It may be stated as a humiliating fact, showing the low estate of our church, that no sum above \$250 has yet been received from any one in aid of Kenyon College, though numbers reside in this city who could cancel the debt themselves, and never feel the loss of so trifling a sum. When shall we see men awakening to a sense of their responsibility and their stewardship to God? When shall we hear them exclaim, with Zaccheus, 'Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor.'"—*Epis. Rec.*, Oct. 21, 1843.



to walk worthy the honorable and grave employment wherewith God and the church hath dignified him; not fearing lest he should meet with some outward holy thing in religion, which his lay touch or presence might profane, but lest something unholy from within his own heart should dishonor and profane in himself that priestly unction and clergy-right whereto Christ hath entitled him. Then would the congregation of the Lord soon recover the true likeness and visage of what she is indeed, a holy generation, a royal priesthood, a saintly communion, the household and city of God. And this I hold to be another considerable reason why the functions of church government ought to be free and open to any Christian man, though never so laic, if his capacity, his faith, and prudent demeanor commend him. And this the apostles warrant us to do." ¹⁵⁷

13. Such a system of religion as that we have been contemplating, harmonizes with, and fosters our free institutions.

There is a harmony between government and religion. There is a mutual relation and adaptation between our free, republican government and a popular ecclesiastical organization, like that of the apostolical and primitive church. Such a system harmonizes with our partialities and prejudices; it coincides with our national usages; it is congenial to all our civil institutions. This is a consideration of great importance. It is enough of itself to outweigh, a thousand-fold, all that prelacy ever dreamed of in its own favor. Indeed, the spiritual despotism of that system, its absolute monarchical powers, constitute one strong objection to it. It is the religion of despots and tyrants. Such the papal form of it has always been; and such, we cannot doubt, is still one inherent characteristic of high, exclusive Episcopacy, however it may be modified by circumstances. The church of England, from the time of its establishment,

¹⁵⁷ Milton's Prose Works, Vol. I, p. 167.

says Macaulay, "continued to be, for more than one hundred and fifty years, the servile handmaid of monarchy, the steady enemy of public liberty."¹⁵⁸ James, the tyrant of that age, uniformly silenced every plea in behalf of the Puritans, with the significant exclamation, "No bishop no king." So indispensable is the hierarchy to a monarchy. But in a free republic it is a monstrous anomaly.

On the other hand, be it remembered, "the New Testament is emphatically a republican book. It sanctions no privileged orders; it gives no exclusive rights. All, who imbibe its spirit and obey its precepts, are recognized as equals; children of the same Father; brethren and sisters in Christ, and heirs to a common inheritance. In the spirit of these kind and endearing relations, the first Christians formed themselves into little republican communities, acknowledging no head but Jesus Christ, and regulating all their concerns by mutual consultation and a popular vote of the brotherhood. In these distinct and independent societies was realized for the first time in this world the perfect idea of civil and religious liberty.

"The Puritans imbibed the same spirit, and derived their principles from the same pure source of light, of holiness and freedom. They modeled their churches after the primitive form, and founded them on the basis of entire independence and equality of rights. Twice in their native land had they saved the British constitution from being crushed by the usurpations of the Stuarts; and Hume, who was never backward to reproach both their character and their principles, is compelled to acknowledge that what of liberty breathes in that constitution is to be ascribed to the influence of the Puritans.¹⁵⁹ These were the

¹⁵⁸ *Miscellanies*, Boston ed., I, p. 249.

¹⁵⁹ "So absolute, indeed, was the authority of the crown, that the precious spark of liberty had been kindled and was preserved by the Puritans; and it was to this sect, whose principles appear so frivolous, and habits so ridiculous, that the English owe the whole freedom of their constitution." Again, "It was only during the next generation that the noble principles of



men who settled New-England. They came here bearing in their bosoms the sacred love of liberty and religion; and ere they left the little bark that had borne them across the ocean, they formed themselves 'into a civil body politic,' having for its basis this fundamental principle, that they *should be ruled by the majority*. Here is brought out the grand idea of a free, elective government. Here is the germ of that tree of liberty which now rears its lofty top to the heavens, spreading its branches over the length and breadth of our land, and under whose shade seventeen millions of freemen are reposing. The spirit of all our free, civil, and religious institutions was in the breasts of our pilgrim fathers.

"How striking is the resemblance between the churches planted by the apostles, and those established in this land by our venerated fathers? Well may we believe them, when they say, that the primitive, apostolic churches were the only pattern they had in their eye in organizing the churches of New-England. They certainly well understood their pattern, and were singularly happy in imitating it." ¹⁶⁰

"Many more graceful and more winning forms of human nature there have been, and are, and shall be; many men, many races there are, and have been, and shall be, of more genial dispositions, more tasteful accomplishments, a quicker eye for the beautiful of art and nature, less disagreeably absorbed, less gloomily careful and troubled about the mighty interests of the spiritual being, or of the commonwealth. . . . But where, in the long series of ages that furnish the matter of history, was there ever one,—*where one*, better fitted by the possession of the highest traits of man, to do the noblest work of man; better fitted

liberty took root, and spreading themselves under the shelter of Puritanical absurdities, became fashionable among the people."—*Hume's Eng.*, Vol. V, pp. 183, 469.

¹⁶⁰ Hawes's *Tribute to the Memory of the Pilgrims*, pp. 61—63, 83, 84.

to consummate and establish the Reformation,—to save the English constitution, at its last gasp, from the fate of other European constitutions, and prepare, on the granite and iced mountain summits of the new world, a still better rest for a still better liberty?”

In conclusion, we would acknowledge, with devout gratitude to God, the rich inheritance which we have received from our puritan forefathers, in the religious institutions which they have transmitted to us.

They have given us a religion, more allied, both in spirit and in form, to scriptural Christianity, than any other that has ever arisen upon the world,—a religion, more abundant in blessings, and more to be prized than any other; a religion, from which the whole American system, with all its institutions, social, civil and religious, has arisen. Our pilgrim fathers, while at anchor off our coast, and before they set foot upon these shores, after solemn prayer to the God of nations, entered mutually into a social compact, on board the Mayflower, to establish a government here “for the glory of God and the advancement of the Christian faith.” With this intent they landed and entered upon their great work, as if conscious of their high destiny; reared up of God to establish and extend the principles of civil and religious freedom which they had so nobly defended in their father-land. There they had freely bled, and suffered the loss of all things in their inflexible adherence to these principles. Harassed and wearied, but not dismayed, by their continual bonds, imprisonments, and persecutions at home, and by their exile abroad, they resolved to seek an asylum in the wilderness of the new world, where, in peaceful seclusion, they might establish a government for the glory of God and the advancement of the Christian faith. The Bible was their statute-book; and their religion, that primitive Christianity which God gave to the world through the medium of our Lord and his apostles. In



fulfilment of their design, their first care was to set up the tabernacle of the Lord in this wilderness. They erected the church, and fast by this the school-house; then the court-house, the academy, the college, while yet they were of one faith and one name. No other form of religion was known, in this land of the pilgrims, until the great principles of the American system were developed, and established here by our puritan forefathers.

The truth is, they were no ordinary men. They lived for no ordinary purpose. They were the most remarkable men which the world has ever produced. They lived for a nobler end, for a higher destiny than any that have ever lived. These are the men to whom New-England owes her religion, with all the blessings, social, civil, and literary, that follow in its train. These are the venerable men whose blood still flows in our veins, and into whose inheritance we have entered. Peace to their silent shades. Fragrant as the breath of morning be their memory. The winds of two centuries have swept over their graves. The effacing hand of time has well nigh worn away the perishable monuments which may have marked the spot where sleeps their honored dust. But they still live. They live in the immortal principles which they taught;—in the enduring institutions which they established. They live in the remembrance of a grateful posterity; and they will live on, through all time, in the gratitude of unborn generations, who, in long succession, shall rise up and call them blessed. And shall we, “who keep the graves, and bear the names, and boast the blood” of these men, disown their church, or cast out as evil, and revile their religion? No; by the memory of these noble men; by their holy lives, their heavenly principles, their sacred institutions; by the sustaining strength which they themselves are still giving to our own freedom, and to the great cause of civil and religious liberty throughout the earth,—let us never give up the religion of our forefathers. No, never; never!

But we have seen of late years several young men, of a certain cast of character, annually straying away from the fold of their fathers, and coldly rejecting their own religious birthright, in exchange for a more imposing ritual, encumbered with a mass of anti-scriptural ceremonials, and withal, sadly deficient in the means of spiritual improvement. And other young aspirants there may be, recreant to the faith of their fathers, and eager to follow in the footsteps of their apostatizing predecessors. Well, be it so. If there be any who find themselves seized with a desire to forsake the altar and communion of their fathers, and to consign their sainted ancestors, together with their kindred according to the flesh, and their brethren in Christ, with whom they have often sat at the table of the Lord,—the very lambs of the flock it may be, whom they themselves have gathered into the fold of Christ, and sought gently to lead in the path of life,—if, I say, they can now leave all these, with “cool atrocity,” to “uncovenanted mercy,”—if such be the humor of their mind, be it so; but if they have yet an ear to hear, there is a voice of gentle admonition to which they do well to give heed. From the dying lips of puritan ancestry it calls to them in tones of kind but earnest remonstrance, “We do earnestly testify that if any who are given to change, do rise up to unhinge the well established churches in this land, it will be the duty and interest of the churches to examine whether the men of this trespass are more prayerful, more zealous, more patient, more heavenly, more universally conscientious, and harder students and better scholars, and more willing to be informed and advised, than those great and good men who left unto the churches what they now enjoy. If they be not so, it will be wisdom to forbear pulling down, with their own hands, the houses of God which were built by their wiser fathers, until they have better satisfaction.”¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁴ Rev. John Higginson and Rev. William Hubbard.



CHAPTER VII.

RISE OF EPISCOPACY.

At what period of time the republican principle, in the church, began to give place to the aristocratic and monarchical element, is not distinctly known. It is, however, admitted by Dean Waddington, "that the spirit of religion and the first government of the church was popular;" and that "the Episcopal government was clearly not yet established," at the close of the first century when Clement wrote. Riddle makes essentially the same concession; and with him many other Episcopalians. Such, indeed, seems to be the acknowledged opinion of that class of this denomination who disclaim the doctrine of the divine right of Episcopacy.

On the other hand, it is generally conceded that the popular form of government in the church, began gradually to change into one more despotic, soon after the age of the apostles. Those changes in the organization of the apostolical churches, which finally gave rise to the Episcopal system, began, in the opinion of some, as early as the first half of the second century. Many others, with greater probability, refer the commencement of the transition to the *second half* of the same century. Nothing appears in history to define with precision the period of the change in question. It was doubtless different in different churches. Springing gradually, and almost imperceptibly, from many

causes, it was unnoticed, or left unrecorded in the scanty records of that early period which still remain unto us.

The Episcopal hierarchy had its origin undoubtedly in what may be denominated the parochial system. This term denotes the intermediate state of the church, in its transition from the primitive, apostolical form, to that of the diocesan confederacy. The churches, in the principal towns, gradually gained a controlling influence over those which were planted in the country round about. And the clergy of these central churches came, by degrees, into similar relations to their brethren in the country. So that both minister, and people of the city became, through the operation of various causes, the centre of influence and power over the feeble churches that gradually sprang up in the country around. The church of the metropolis became, in the quaint style of church history, the mother-church, to smaller, dependent fraternities in the country; and the clerical head of this church, the principal man among his brethren, the presiding genius of their assemblies and councils. This accidental ascendancy of the central church, and of its clergy, led on the rapid development of the Episcopal system: and, finally, ended in the overthrow of the popular government of the primitive church.

This chapter, therefore, will be devoted to a consideration of the causes which gave, both to the churches and to the bishops of the principal cities, that increasing ascendancy and power, from which we trace the rise of Episcopacy.

I. Of the ascendancy of the churches in the cities over those of the country.

The gospel was first preached in large cities and towns, such as Jerusalem, Antioch, Ephesus, Corinth, and the like. Here were the earliest churches founded. These churches now became central points of effort and influence for the extension of Christianity in the region round about.



The apostles themselves, sometimes made such missionary excursions into the neighboring towns and villages, Acts 8: 25; 9: 32. Similar efforts were doubtless continued and greatly extended, by the pastors and converts of those central churches. The promptings of Christian benevolence naturally directed them to such efforts. Clement represents the apostles to have established churches, in this manner, both in the cities and in the country.

The early Christians were often dispersed abroad, also, by persecution; and, like the first Christians, Acts, 8: 4, "went every where preaching the word."

Strangers and visitors in the principal cities, where the gospel was preached, also became frequent converts to Christ, and returned home to make known his gospel, as they might have opportunity and ability in the places where they resided.

Whatever the means may have been, it is an acknowledged historical fact, that the Christian religion continued to spread with wonderful rapidity throughout the first century; and that by the close of this period it had pervaded, not only the principal cities, but the country also, in many provinces of the Roman empire. Pliny, A. D., 103 or 104, in the remote province of Bithynia, complains that "this contagious superstition was not confined to the cities only, but had spread its infection through the country villages."¹ These new presbyters in the surrounding country, while yet few and feeble, became of course members of the neighboring church. The parent church became a great parish spreading out over an indefinite extent of country, and having several subordinate branches in connection with it, more or less dependent, over which it exerted a sustaining and controlling influence.

For a time, Dr. Campbell supposes that these converts in the villages received pastoral instruction, and the elements

¹ Ep. Lib. 10, 97.

of the eucharist, from persons sent out for that purpose from the city; but that all continued to come into the city to worship. Such also is the representation of Justin Martyr; who says, "that on the day which was called Sunday, all that live in the city *and in the country* come together in the same place,"² for religious worship.

When, in process of time, it became expedient for Christian converts in the country to hold separate places of worship, these new organizations took the form of the parent church, and still looked unto that for instruction and support as they might need. They had, indeed, a striking analogy to the chapels of ease in England; having a similar dependence upon the mother-church. This dependence gave rise to a gradual connection and coalition, between the churches in the country, and the central church in the city. In this connection and coalition, between the original church and the smaller ones that sprang up around it, began that change in the original organization of the apostolical churches which gave rise to the Episcopal system; and, in the end, totally subverted the primitive simplicity and freedom in which the churches were at first founded. This dependence and consequent coalition was, originally, only the result of various natural causes and local circumstances which claim a more specific enumeration.

1. The churches in the country were only branches of the parent stock, and owned a filial relation to the mother-church.

2. They received their first spiritual teachers and pastors from this church, who would naturally retain their attachment to the same, and use their influence to promote the union of the church to which they went, with that from which they came.

3. The connection between the country and the city, in the ordinary course of business, had its influence in bring-

² Apol., c. 67, p. 83.



ing the churches in the country into connection with that in the city.

4. The persecutions, and consequent distress which came upon the churches, brought them into closer connection one with another.

5. The city was the centre of political influence and power, for the government and protection of the country. This consideration had its influence in promoting a similar relation between the churches in the city, and those in the country.—The people had long been subject to the civil authority which was concentrated in the city; and, on this account, the more readily yielded to a similar control from the same quarter over the affairs of the church.

6. The church itself was deservedly the object of respect. It was founded, it may be, by one of the apostles, and still enjoyed the ministry of a successor placed at a short remove from them, and to whom they looked for counsel and support.

“An ancient custom obtained, of attributing to those churches which had been founded by the apostles, a superior degree of honor, and a more exalted dignity. On which account it was for the most part usual, when any dispute arose respecting principles or tenets, for the opinion of these churches to be asked; as, also, for those who entered into discussion of any matters connected with religion, to refer, in support of their positions, to the voice of the apostolic churches. We may, therefore, hence, very readily perceive the reason which, in cases of doubt and controversy, caused the Christians of the West to have recourse to the church of Rome; those of Africa, to that of Alexandria; and those of Asia, to that of Antioch for their opinion; and which, also, occasioned these opinions to be, not unfrequently regarded in the light of laws, namely, that these churches had been planted, reared up and regu-

lated, either by the hand or under the immediate care of some one, or more of the apostles themselves."³

7. The city church was comparatively rich and powerful; and could administer to the wants of the feeble churches as they might need. For this reason, especially in times of distress and persecution, they clung as closely as possible to the parent church.

8. Protection and aid from the civil authority was chiefly to be sought through the same medium. The minister of the city could apply in their behalf to the Roman governors who resided there. Or if a direct application were inexpedient, there were still many ways and means, by which to operate secretly upon the magistrates, and their subordinate officers, for the advantage of the churches in the country. Christian converts were not unfrequently entrusted with some civil office, in which they could be instrumental in administering to the aid of their brethren in the country.

Thus, in various ways, the churches in the large cities, in process of time, gathered about them several smaller churches in the vicinity, over which they extended their guardianship and care. The clergy of the central churches had a controlling influence over those in the neighborhood, which was conceded to them by common consent; and which, in reality, was not at first oppressive, but beneficial to the subordinate churches. It was, however, a silent surrender of their original and inherent right as independent churches; and led on an entire change in the ecclesiastical polity of the primitive church, as established by the apostles.

The above representations disclose the true origin of that ecclesiastical aristocracy which succeeded to the popular government of the apostolical churches. They exhibit the rise of the diocesan form of government, not as based

³ Mosheim, *De Rebus Christ.*, Sæc. II, § 21.



on mere hypothesis, but as the result of the mutual relations of the churches in the country to that in the city. The church of the metropolis gradually spread itself out as an extensive parish over the adjacent territory. And the bishop of this city became, virtually, the bishop over the same extent of country. "Was it not natural," says Planck, after alluding to many of the circumstances above-mentioned, "was it not natural, and according to the ordinary course of things, to make a distinction between the bishop of the city, and the other clergy? Would not they themselves, cheerfully make the distinction, and give him special tokens of their consideration? Would they not accost him with peculiar respect; and by silent consent, give him the pre-eminence? And would he not, on the other hand, requite all this by his manifold services? Hence arose those new relations which laid the foundation for the metropolitan system."⁴

Throughout the second and third centuries, there was no established law or rule, binding the smaller churches in a coalition with the greater, or bringing them into subjection to it. It was wholly a conventional arrangement, a matter of expediency and convenience, resulting from various circumstances that have already been detailed. But that which was first conceded voluntarily, was afterwards claimed by right. Conventional usage became established law; the controlling influence of the bishop, an official prerogative; and thus, in the end, a diocesan form of government was settled upon the church.

Siegel and Ziegler have given two examples from Fuchs, in illustration of these relations between the parent church and those of the country adjacent. It appears that, at the council of Nice, a question arose between the bishops of that city and of Nicomedia, respecting the juris-

⁴ *Gesellschafts-Verfass.*, 1, pp. 82, 83. Comp: also, 546—562, respecting this system at a later period.

diction of Basilinopolis, a small city in the neighborhood of Nice. This city was originally a small village, but had so increased as to be invested by Justinian with the rights and privileges of a city, and as such, belonged to the jurisdiction of the metropolitan of Nicomedia. But, as a village adjacent to Nice, according to the views above stated, it was under the jurisdiction of the bishop of Nice, who had himself ordained the presbyter of Basilinopolis as a bishop in accordance with the old order of things, and in direct violation of the metropolitan rights of the bishop of Nicomedia, who alone claimed the right to ordain bishops in his own province. The only defence which the bishop of Nice could offer, was to claim jurisdiction over it, on the ground of its relation to Nice; having formally belonged to the precincts of that city as a neighboring and dependent church. The instance goes to show that such relations had existed, and were still claimed as valid, even under the metropolitan system then in force.

The second example is derived from the region of the Mareotis, near Alexandria. In this whole extent of country so late as the fourth century, there was no bishop, or rural bishop, *chorepiscopus*; but only presbyters, who were under the jurisdiction of the bishop of Alexandria; and so jealous was he of this prerogative, that he had refused, for this length of time, any other ministry to the churches of the Mareotis than that of presbyters.

The same state of things is apparent from the relations of the presbyters in the city to the bishop, in contrast with those of presbyters in the country. When, in process of time, several distinct churches were found in a given city, the presbyters of these churches refused themselves to acknowledge a subordination to the bishop similar to that of the presbyters in the country. They claimed an equality with him. They had elected him from their own number; and they continued to regard him only as *primus*.

inter pares; and, as ministers in the metropolis, claimed precedence over those in the country. Thus in the letter of the Arians to Alexander, the bishop and *all the clergy* of Alexandria first affix their signature. Then follows that of three bishops from other parts of Egypt. All which serves to illustrate the subordination of the clergy in the country to those of the city.

This view of the subject is not new; nor is it put forth as original in the writer. It has the sanction of many authors from whom the above particulars have been derived. Of these, it is sufficient to mention, Spittler,⁵ Pertsch,⁶ Mosheim,⁷ Planck,⁸ Neander,⁹ Guericke,¹⁰ Siegel,¹¹ Schoene,¹² W. Böhmer,¹³ D'Aubigné.¹⁴

II. Of the early ascendancy of the bishops in the cities over those of the country.

In close connection with the foregoing changes in the government of the churches and in their relations to each other, there were others which were equally influential in disturbing the mutual relations which had hitherto subsisted, both between the clergy one toward another, and between the bishop of the city and the clergy in the country.

1. Of these changes, the most important is the division of the clergy into the separate orders of *bishop* and *presbyter*. The ordinary priesthood, as established under the apostles, constituted, as we have seen, but one class or

⁵ Can. Rechts., § 4—10. ⁶ *Ib.*, § 17—23, und. Kirchen Hist., Sec. II.

⁷ De Rebus Christ., Saec. II, § 37, note 3.

⁸ Gesell. Verfass., pp. 18—63, 546—572.

⁹ Allgem. Kirchen Gesch., 1, 2d ed., p. 314—316. ¹⁰ *Ib.*, p. 95—97.

¹¹ Kirchliche Verfass., 2, pp. 454—473; 4, p. 378.

¹² Geschichtsforschungen, Vol. 3, p. 336—340. See also, Conc. Carthag., t. 31, Bracar., c. 1, Agath., c. 53, Tarracon., c. 8.

¹³ Alterthumswissenschaft, 1, p. 230—236.

¹⁴ Hist. of Reformation, Vol. I, p. 18. N. Y., 1843.

order; and were denominated, indiscriminately and interchangeably, bishops and presbyters. The great historian, to whom the reader is indebted for the Introduction which stands at the head of this volume, ascribes the origin of this distinction to the second century, and the full development of their respective orders to a period considerably later.¹⁵ Waiving, in this place, the further discussion of this vexed question, we will here state the origin of this distinction, according to Siegel and others, as a fair expression of the prevailing views of those who deny the original superiority of the bishop and the apostolical origin of Episcopacy.

There was at first but one church in a city, to which all the Christian converts belonged. But the care of the church was entrusted, not to one man, but to several, who constituted a *college of presbyters*, and divided the duties of their office among themselves. This arrangement was conformable to the analogy of the Jewish synagogue, after which the church was organized. A plurality of persons every where appears in the Acts as the representatives of the church at Jerusalem. They appear, also, in the church at Ephesus, Acts 20: 17—28; and at Philippi, Phil. 1: 1. Titus was also instructed to ordain *elders* in all the cities in Crete. In such a college of elders, sharing a joint responsibility in the care of the churches, it would obviously be convenient, if not indispensable, for one of their number to act as the moderator or president of their assemblies. Such a designation, however, would confer on the presiding elder no *official* superiority over his fellow-presbyters; but, coupled with age, and talents, and spiritual gifts, it might give him a control in their councils, and in the government of the church. This control, and this official rank, as the *πρῶτος*, the presiding elder, which was first conceded to him by his fellow-presbyters only *as*

¹⁵ Comp. his *Apost. Gesch.*, 1, 50, 198, seq. 406. *Allgem. Kirch.*, 1, 327, 328, 2d ed.

a fellow-presbyter, a *primus inter pares*, he began in time to claim as his official prerogative. He first began by moral means and the influence of accidental circumstances to be the bishop of the church, and afterwards claimed the office as his right. This assumption of authority gave rise to the gradual distinction between bishop and presbyter. It began early to disturb the relations of equality which at first subsisted between the ministers of the churches; and, in the course of the second and third centuries, resulted in the division of the clergy into two distinct orders,—bishops and presbyters.

This simple exposition of the origin of the Episcopal office has the sanction of the most approved authorities, particularly of the distinguished historian whose works we have so often cited,¹⁶ to which we may add Gieseler,¹⁷ Guericke,¹⁸ Gabler,¹⁹ Mosheim,²⁰ Pertsch,²¹ and many others.

2. The duties and responsibilities of the bishop, in times of persecution, had their influence in exalting this officer, and separating him further, both from the presbyters and the people. Under such circumstances, the bishop of the metropolis became the counsellor and guardian of the

¹⁶ *Apost. Kirch.*, 1, 39, seq. 3d ed., 50, 198, seq. 406. *Allgem. Gesch.*, 1, 324, seq. 2d ed. "In the Acts, a plurality of presbyters always appears next in rank to the apostles, as representatives of the church at Jerusalem. If any one is disposed to maintain that each one of these presbyters presided over a smaller part of its special meetings, still it must be thereby established, that, notwithstanding these divided meetings, the church formed a whole, over which this deliberative college of presbyters presided, and therefore the form of government was still of a popular character."—*Neander, Apost. Kirch.*, 1, c. 2, 3d ed. "This plurality of ministers over the same church continued, even to the fourth century, to be the order of the churches."—*Planck, Gesell. Verfass.*, 1, 551.

¹⁷ *Lehrbuch der Kirchengesch.*, 3, Aufl. 1, 118.

¹⁸ *Kirch. Geschichte*, 1, pp. 89—93, 2d ed.

¹⁹ *De Epis. primæ eccl. eorumque origine.*

²⁰ *Hist. Eccl.*, 3, p. 108, seq., and *Kirchenrecht*, by Ernst, p. 52.

²¹ *Can. Recht.*, p. 42. *Kirch. Hist.*, *Sæc. II*, c. 5, § 8—15. Compare, especially, Ziegler's *Versuch der Gesch. der Kirch. Verfass.*, pp. 34—51.

churches. His wisdom, his talents, and his influence were their confidence and trust. To him the needy and distressed also looked for consolation and relief.

3. The rage and vengeance of their persecutors fell often upon him; and, while it excited the sympathy and veneration of the church, prepared them more readily to acquiesce in his authority.²³

4. As the church increased in numbers, the intercourse between each member individually and the bishop became less, and a corresponding separation between him and his people of necessity ensued.

5. Many of them were the successors of the apostles, or the bishops of apostolical churches, and this circumstance gave them additional consideration.²³ The bishops of Rome,²⁴ of Carthage, of Jerusalem,²⁵ and others, derived importance from this consideration. The divisions and regulations of these churches, which had been planted by the hand, or reared up under the immediate supervision of the apostles, had, with other churches, not unfrequently a canonical authority equivalent to that of statute laws.²⁶

6. The distinction between the *clergy* and *laity*, which began about this time, is worthy of particular notice. In the apostolical churches the office of teaching was not restricted to any particular class of persons. All Christians accounted themselves the priests of God; and between the church and their spiritual leaders very little distinction was known. This fact is so universally acknowledged, that it

²³ Spittler's *Can. Recht.*, c. 1, § 5.

²⁴ Comp. Tertull., *De Praescript. Advers. Haeret.*, c. 20, 26, 36. Peter de Marca, *de Concord. Sacerd. et Im.*, Lib. 5, c. 20. Lib. 7, c. 4, § 6, seq.

²⁵ Irenaeus, *Advers. Haer.*, Lib. 3, c. 2; 4, c. 26; 5, c. 20, 44.

²⁶ Firmil., *ap. Cyp.*, *Epist.* 75.

²⁷ Mosheim, *De Rebus Christ.*, Saec. II, § 21. In this section and the accompanying note is given a full and interesting illustration of the canonical authority of such churches. Comp., also, Gieseler, *Lehrbuch*, pp. 160—163, Note.



were needless to multiply authorities in proof of it. But it forcibly indicates the nature of the original constitution of the church.²⁷ The distinction, accordingly, of pastors and people into two distinct orders, the *clergy* and the *laity*, as distinctly marks the workings of that spirit which was fast obliterating the features of its early organization. Tertullian, † 218, is the first to mention this distinction.²⁸ The people have now become an inferior order, the distinction between them and the higher order of the clergy widens fast, and the government of the church, which has hitherto been vested in the people, passes rapidly into the hands of the bishop.

7. The clergy begin to claim authority from the analogies of the Jewish priesthood. The officers of the church were originally organized according to the order of the Jewish synagogue. The name and office of rulers of the synagogue were transferred to the church. But the bishops now begin entirely to change their ground, and to claim analogy to the *Jewish priesthood* of the Old Testament. They are no longer incumbents in office at the pleasure of the people, and dependent upon them; but divinely constituted the priests of God; and divinely appointed by him to instruct and to rule over the church. "When once the idea of a Mosaic priesthood had been adopted in the Christian church, the clergy soon began to assume a superiority over the laity. The customary form of consecration

²⁷ Nonne et laici sacerdotes sumus? Differentiam inter ordinem et plebem constituit *ecclesiae auctoritas*; adeo ubi ecclesiastici ordinis non est consensus et offers, et tingis et sacerdos tibi es solus.—*De Exhortat. Castit.*, c. 7, p. 522. Primum omnes docebant et omnes baptizabant; ut cresceret plebs et multiplicaretur omnibus inter initia consensus est et evangelizare et baptizare et scripturas explorare.—*Hilary, cited by Neander, Allgem. Gesch.*, 1, p. 311. Comp. p. 324, seq., especially 335—337, 2d ed. Comp. Cyprian, Ep. 76. Suicer, Thesaurus, art. *κληρος*, Guericke, Kirch. Gesch., Vol. I, 93, 94, and J. H. Böhm, De Differentiam inter Ordinem Ecclesiast., &c.

²⁸ De Monogamia, c. 12, p. 533.

was now supposed to have a certain mystic influence, and henceforth they stand in the position of persons appointed by God to be the medium of communication between him and the Christian world."²⁹

8. From this it was but a slight modification to assert the divine right of Episcopacy, and the apostolical succession in the line of the bishops. Sentiments to this effect are of frequent occurrence in the writings of Cyprian, † 258. The bishops also assumed new titles, such as *sacerdotes*,³⁰ *priests*, *high-priests*, rulers of the church, &c.³¹

Finally, these arrogant assumptions ended in the claim of guidance and wisdom from on high, by the communications of the Spirit of God. This was also the false and flattering dream of Cyprian,³² and from him has been, more or less, the favorite dogma of prelacy, to the present day. These claims of the bishop to a divine commission, and to illumination from above, were more confidently put forth at a later period, when the hierarchy was more fully established.

The following comprehensive summary offers a fit conclusion to the preceding remarks. "In process of time," says Mosheim, "the bishops found means to abridge the rights of the presbyters, the deacons, and the people. Such is the course of the world. They who are honored with the respect, and entrusted with the affairs of society, agreeably to the natural love which every man has for pre-

²⁹ Gieseler, Cunningham's Trans., 1, p. 156. Comp. Münscher's Handbuch der Christ. Dog., 3, p. 15. Conder's Protestant Nonconformity, Vol. I, p. 224. Comp. Planck, Gesell. Verfass., 1, p. 163. Mosheim, De Rebus Christ., Saec. II, § 24.

³⁰ Comp. Cyp., Ep. 3, 4, 59. Spittler's Can. Recht., c. 1, § 11. Henke, Allgem. Gesch. der Christ. Kirch., 1, p. 120. Mosheim, De Rebus, Saec. III, § 24.

³¹ Origen, Hom. 2, in Jer., Adv. Cels., Lib. 3. In Math., Tract 31, 32.

³² Placuit nobis sancto spiritu suggerente et Domino per visiones multas et manifestas admonente.—Cyprian, Epist. 54, p. 79. Conc. Car., A. D. 252.

eminence, seek for greater distinction, and the people favor the desire. Strife and contention are the necessary consequence of dividing offices of trust among many; and these struggles usually end in the advancement of him who is highest in office. Even Cyprian, who acknowledged the authority of the church over the bishop, and his duty in all things to act in concert with the clergy, had still the address so to exalt the power of the bishop as to overthrow the rights both of the clergy and the people. He affirmed that God made the bishops; that they were the vicegerents of Christ, and responsible to none but to God. He was the father of this dogma; and the bishops continued to claim this prerogative until the ninth century, when the pope appropriated it exclusively to himself. The rights of the people and of the clergy were, in process of time, wrested from them, they retaining only a negative vote. The bishops proceeded themselves to appoint the presbyters and deacons. The people were, at first, consulted by the bishops, but it was only an unmeaning form. The bishop carried the appointment of his favorite candidate; and the reference to the people was a mere act of courtesy. They were the agents of God. Opposition to their will was disobedience to him. The deacons became the creatures of the bishop, dependent upon him alone, and having little concern with the people. In a word, the deacons, even in the second century, were, in many places, no more what they were at first. In ecclesiastical matters, the people were still consulted in some form, either by the bishop in person or by deputies; but they neither voted individually, nor collectively, in concert. When any measure of importance was to be carried, the bishops first secured the interest of the presbyters in their favor; and when, by various means, they had accomplished this, it only remained for the people to yield a respectful acquiescence.

Some occasionally dissented, but the measure was generally carried, agreeably to the will of the bishop."³³

The bishops rose in rank and power, as we have seen, not by any sudden and violent assumption of diocesan authority, but by the silent concession and approbation, at first, of the people. Their authority and influence was, as yet, only that which is conceded to talent and piety in official stations, employed and exerted for the general good. "So that the growth of Episcopal power is not altogether attributable to ambitious designs on the part of those by whom it was first exercised. So far from this, the effect, as Dr. Campbell has remarked, 'is much more justly ascribed to their virtues.' How paradoxical soever this may sound, it is difficult to account in any other way for the unopposed ascendancy which was so soon obtained by men, whose ambition, had it betrayed itself when as yet unarmed by wealth or power, required but to be withstood, in order to be rendered harmless. That deference was, however, lavishly conceded to personal character, from a principle of veneration and unbounded confidence, which it would have been next to impossible openly to wrest from people roused to a jealous sense of their rights."³⁴ Their influence was analogous to that of a modern missionary over the churches which he has gathered about him in different stations; or it resembled that which the apostles and first preachers exercised over the churches which were planted by them. It is only to be regretted, that these bishops, in claiming to be the successors of the apostles, in office and in power, had not also enough of the spirit of their reputed predecessors, to employ the high trust which was committed unto them only for the interest of the

³³ Kirchenrecht, by Ernst, pp. 61—63.

³⁴ Conder's Nonconformity, 1, p. 227. Campbell's Lectures, pp. 94, 95. Mason's Works, Vol. III, p. 217, seq. Dr. Barrow's Treatise on Popish Supremacy.

churches under their care; and then to resign it again for the same great end, instead of perverting the sacred privileges of their office into the means of gratifying unholy ambition in the extension of the Episcopal prerogatives.

We have here an easy explanation of the difficulty which the advocates of prelacy affect to press with great force, in calling upon us to explain the origin of Episcopacy, on the supposition that it is not of divine appointment. Here, we are told, is an alleged usurpation, "without discussion, without excitement, without opposition, without known authors or abettors; a radical and permanent overthrow of an existing system of church government throughout the whole Roman empire, before the apostles were cold in their graves." Now, a hundred years is surely a considerable time to allow for one to grow cold in his grave. But, all oratory apart, it is conceded here is a change, an early change, and made without controversy or opposition. And we are earnestly pressed for an explanation. We accept the challenge; and appeal to the considerations already suggested as an adequate explanation. All the probabilities of the case are coincident with the change. Is it strange, under all the circumstances of the case, that the care of the churches should devolve upon a few? Is it a thing incredible, that men should love the exercise of power, and find means to secure it? Does history give no trace of any transition from a free and popular government to one more despotic? What was the end of the ancient republics of Greece? What succeeded to the popular government of consular Rome? How did the popular movement in the French Revolution terminate? All history, ecclesiastical and secular, shows how easily the sovereign power of the many may pass into the hands of a few. But in the instance before us, the churches, in confiding simplicity and sincerity, conceded to their spiritual rulers the rights in question by tacit consent. And after

long-continued usage, the sanctions of synodical decrees, confirmed by apostolical succession, by divine right, and by the teachings of the Spirit of God, seem quite sufficient to guarantee to bishops the quiet possession of their Episcopal prerogatives.

"Power," says Dr. Hawkes, himself an eminent Episcopalian, "always passes slowly and silently, and without much notice, from the hands of the many to the few; and all history shows that ecclesiastical domination grows up by little and little. The overwhelming tyranny from which the Reformation freed the Protestant church, grew up by this *paulatim* process." ³⁵

"Different from their modern followers must have been those ancient Presbyterians, not to have struck a single blow!" True, indeed, but not at all different from their modern American successors, were those primitive Episcopalians, in yielding tamely to the continual encroachments of Episcopal power. Nay, we contend that the progress of Episcopacy in this country is itself a phenomenon more extraordinary, more unaccountable, than the rise and progress of Episcopacy in the ancient church.

It is well known that the introduction of Episcopacy into this country gave rise to a long and bitter controversy. The objection, from within the Episcopal churches as well as from without, was, that its form of government is anti-republican, and opposed to the spirit of our free institutions. The House of Burgesses, in Virginia, composed chiefly of Episcopalians, declared their abhorrence of bishops, unless at the distance of three thousand miles, and denounced "the plan of introducing them, in the most unexceptionable form, on this side of the Atlantic, as a pernicious project."

When, at last, Episcopacy was introduced, it was only by a compromise,—the Episcopalian churches consenting to submit to diocesan Episcopacy, only in a form greatly

³⁵ Cited in Smyth's Eccl. Republicanism, p. 166.



modified, and divested of its most obnoxious features. To the exclusion of the laity from a free and full participation in the affairs of the government they would not for a moment submit. Such, according to Bishop White, was the prejudice of Episcopalians, "against the name, and much more against the office of a bishop, that, but for the introduction of the laity into the government of the church, no general organization would probably have been formed." Accordingly, the people were allowed freely to choose their own pastors, and to have a full representation in all their courts. This American Episcopacy was so modified, and the prelatial powers of the bishop so restricted by the checks and balances of republican principles, that the English prelates, on the other hand, were reluctant to confer the Episcopate upon Bishop White, alleging that he "entertained a design to set up Episcopacy on the ground of *presbyterial and lay authority*."

Such was American Episcopacy, at first,—qualified as much as possible, by the infusion of popular principles, to restrain the arbitrary powers of the bishop. But what now has this same Episcopacy become? What are now the powers of the bishop, compared with what they then were? He is enthroned in power almost as arbitrary as that of an Eastern despot; and assumes to rule by an authority independent of the will of his subjects. The bishops are permanent and irresponsible monarchs, restrained by no judicial tribunal. The house of bishops admit no order of the inferior clergy to their councils. They have an absolute veto upon the acts of the general convention. They ordain, depose, and restore to the ministry, at pleasure, whom they will; "so that a Puseyite bishop may fill the church with impenitent and unconverted men." He can prevent any congregation from settling the minister of their choice, or displace one at his will, and may, "*upon probable cause*," forbid any clergyman from another diocese to offici-

ate in his own. Such is the fearful nature of those powers which are now entrusted to this spiritual despot in our free republic.³⁶

And yet, in the face of all this ominous accumulation of the Episcopal prerogatives, the claims of the bishops are still pressed higher and higher. The house of bishops, with all its powers, has been superinduced upon the general convention, since its establishment in America. Now these privileged hierarchs can only be tried *by themselves*; i. e., if a president is guilty of any crime or misdemeanor whatever, he must be impeached and tried by a jury of *presidents alone*; a governor, by a jury of governors. In one convention, the bishop lately claimed and exercised the right of adjusting, himself, the roll of the members, denying to them the right of all deliberative assemblies,—that of deciding upon the qualifications of their own members; and that same convention, “by a vote of nearly three to one,” meekly accorded to their prelate this right.³⁷ Another convention provides that its proceedings “*shall not be open to the public*.” It gives to the bishop an absolute veto upon all their acts; and, to crown the whole, makes him “the judge in all ecclesiastical trials.” Well may we say, with Dr. Hawkes, “NOTHING BUT THIS WAS WANTING TO MAKE HIM ABSOLUTE. We will speak, and speak out, when we see all power, legislative, judicial, and executive, centred in one man in such ample plenitude, that he may even dictate to the fashion of a surplice, or the shape of a gown.”³⁸

This admirable specimen of religious legislation, we are told, was actually prepared by the bishop himself, and rati-

³⁶ These astounding facts and principles, with the original authorities for them, are disclosed more at length in the writings of Dr. Smyth, to whom we are chiefly indebted for the above abstract of them. Compare, especially, *Apost. Succession*, pp. 507—509, and *Ecclesiastical Republicanism*, pp. 153—172.

³⁷ *Letters to the Laity*, by a Protestant Episcopalian, p. 17.

³⁸ *New York Review*, Oct., 1835, cited in *Letters to the Laity*.

fied in a state more radically democratic than any other in the Union! "Let any man read that constitution, and then say, whether, if the individual who has been thus extravagantly exalted, had dared to brave the public sentiment of the country in which he lives, so far as to carry out into practice the authority which has been thus lavishly bestowed upon him, we should not have to look to the mountains of Vermont for the mightiest spiritual autocrat at present inhabiting the globe,—with, perhaps, one exception, the man who wears the tiara, and builds his habitation on the seven hills."³⁹ In addition to all this, the late transactions in the diocese of New York are fresh in the public mind, and familiar to all;—the high-handed despotism of the prelate, and the profound self-abasement with which a large portion of that body could consent to kneel down in the dust at the feet of their sovereign pontiff, and crave his benediction.

Consider now this enormous extension of the Episcopal power in this enlightened age, in this free republic,—this monstrous spiritual despotism imposed upon a people, jealous above all men of their rights, and prompt to repel every invasion of them;—contemplate such a people, under such circumstances, with scarce a feeble note of remonstrance, bowing themselves down to this hierarchal supremacy, and shall we wonder at the early rise of a mild and unformed Episcopacy? Shall we marvel at the gradual extension of its influence over feeble churches, dependent for their support and protection? Why should this be thought a thing incredible, in view of what is transpiring in our midst?

³⁹ *Letters to the Laity*, p. 27.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DIOCESAN GOVERNMENT.

THIS term denotes the ecclesiastical organization after a fuller development of the Episcopal system, and farther concentration of power in the hands of the bishop. The system was gradually matured, and settled upon the churches in the several provinces, at different times, extending through an indefinite period. The establishment of this form of government cannot with precision be assigned to a specific epoch. Suffice it to say, that the third century may be assumed as the period in which the diocesan government was chiefly consolidated and established. It was the result of a variety of causes, which deserve a careful consideration, and was productive of consequences of great moment to the interests of religion. The course of our inquiries in relation to the establishment of Diocesan Episcopacy will lead us to consider,

- I. The means of its development.
- II. Its results.

I. Means of its development.

1. The formal organization of the whole system was effected chiefly by means of provincial synods and councils.

The consideration of these councils belongs to another work.¹ But whatever may have been their origin, such

¹ Christian Antiquities, chap. 17, § 9, pp. 356—367.

ecclesiastical assemblies were regularly held, in the third century, in Asia Minor, and were frequently convened in other provinces, for the transaction of business relating to the interests of the church.² They were summoned by the presiding bishop of the province. The bishops of the province were expected to attend, and if any were present from other provinces, they were courteously recognized as members of the same. The presbyters and deacons, also, had at this time, in the opinion of many, a seat and a voice in these councils, though at a later period they were excluded. These councils, on the one hand, were the highest judicature of the church, where all that related to its interests in the province was discussed; on the other, they fulfilled the office of privy council to the bishop. Here, especially, were all cases brought relating to the bishops. Cases of this kind could only be brought before the council in a full assembly of the bishops, and even then not at pleasure, but only with their consent. Such assemblies, it must readily be seen, afforded a convenient method of propounding any subject of common interest unto the churches; though the bishops themselves probably were not aware of the important consequences which might result from assuming thus to give laws to the church. The decisions of the synod, also, at first, assumed the form of law, rather by common consent, than as an imperative enactment. They were the decisions of a public deliberative and representative assembly, in which the voice of the majority becomes the law of the whole; and, under the sanction of such authority, were received as the rule of the church. But the bishops, having once acquired the power of giving laws to the church, soon changed the ground of their authority; and, instead of legislating for

² *Necessario, says Firmilian, A. D. 257, apud nos fit, ut per singulos annos seniores et praepositi in unum conveniamus, ad desponenda ea quae curae nostrae commissa sunt.—Cyp., Ep. 75, p. 143.*

those churches in their name, and as their *representatives*, they assumed the right of giving laws to the church by virtue of their *Episcopal* office; and for this assumption they claimed, as has been already mentioned, the sanction of divine authority, as the ministers of God, *jure divino*, and under the guidance of his Spirit.³

The above representation is only an epitome of the sentiments of Planck, in his work on the Constitution of the Church, which has been so frequently cited.⁴ They accord entirely with the representations of Mosheim, and many others which might be named.⁵ Mosheim very truly remarks, that these councils "were productive of so great an alteration in the general state of the church, as nearly to effect the entire subversion of its ancient constitution. For, in the first place, the primitive rights of the people, in consequence of this new arrangement of things, experienced a considerable diminution; inasmuch as thenceforward none but affairs of comparatively trifling importance were ever made the subject of popular deliberation and adjustment;—the councils of the associated churches assuming to themselves the right of discussing and regulating everything of moment or importance; as well as of determining all questions to which any sort of weight was attached.—In the next place, the dignity and authority of the bishops were very much augmented and enlarged. In the infancy, indeed, of the councils, the bishops did not scruple to acknowledge that they appeared there merely as the ministers or legates of their respective churches; and

³ *Placet! Visum est!* is the style not unfrequently in which the summary decisions of their councils are given; or if the decision relates to an article of faith, *credit catholica ecclesia!* Athanasius, De Synodo. Arimin. et Seleucia, Ferdin., De Mendoza, De Confirmatione Conc., Ill., Lib. 2, c. 2, cited by Spittler.

⁴ Gesellschafts-Verfass., 1, p. 90—100.

⁵ Compare also Henke and Vaters, Allgemein. Kirchen Gesch., 1, p. 120, seq. Eichhorn's Can. Recht., 1, p. 20. Riddle's Chron., pp. 32, 33.

that they were in fact nothing more than representatives acting under instructions. But it was not long before this humble language began, by little and little, to be exchanged for a loftier tone; and they, at length, took it upon them to assert that they were the legitimate successors of the apostles themselves, and might, consequently, by their own proper authority, dictate to the Christian flock. To what an extent the inconveniences and evils arising out of these preposterous pretensions reached in after times, is too well known to require any particular notice in this place."⁶ Some of these remarks, however, are especially applicable, as the intelligent reader will perceive, to the state of things somewhat later under the metropolitan government.

2. The doctrine of the *unity* of the church had an influence in consolidating the churches together under an Episcopal government.

This notion was early developed. It first occurs in the epistle of the church of Smyrna, concerning the martyrdom of Polycarp.⁷ It was more distinctly advanced by Irenaeus and Tertullian, in the second century; and, in the third, became the favorite dogma of Cyprian,⁸ and, after him, of many others.⁹ The effect was to create greater oneness of feeling and concert of action among the churches as members of one and the same body. It brought the churches into more frequent correspondence; and, in many ways, contributed to the establishment of uniform laws and regulations under an Episcopal hierarchy.¹⁰ This idea of a holy catholic church, one and indivisible, extending through

⁶ De Rebus Christ., Saec. II, § 23. Comp. Saec. II, § 22; Saec. III, § 24. Also, Kirch. Recht., pp. 65, 66.

⁷ Euseb., Eccl. Hist., Lib. 4, c. 15, § 1.

⁸ Pro corpore totius ecclesiae cujus pervarias quasque provincias membra digesta sunt.—Ep. 30, p. 41.

⁹ Planck, Gesell. Verfass., 1, p. 100, seq. Rothe, Anf. Chris. Kirch., 1, p. 576—589.

¹⁰ Neander, Allgem. Gesch., 1, pp. 355, 371, 2d ed. D'Aubigné's Hist. of the Reformation. N. Y., 1843. Vol. I, pp. 20—22.

all lands, and binding together in one communion the faithful of every kindred and people, was a conception totally unlike the apostolical sentiment of their union in love and fellowship in spirit. Whatever may have been the motive by which it was at first promulgated, it had its influence in blending the churches together under a uniform diocesan organization, and became the occasion of no small share of the bigotry, intolerance and persecution which have so often dishonored the Christian church.

3. The correspondence and intercourse between the bishops of different provinces had much influence in establishing their diocesan authority.

Not only were the results of their councils officially communicated to foreign bishops and churches, but the bishops themselves of different dioceses were in correspondence one with another. Their own appointment to office, their official acts, were duly communicated. By mutual understanding a concerted action and effort was sustained, to aid each other in the promotion of their common ends. Their acts of ecclesiastical censure were extensively published; so that one under Episcopal bans was followed by his sentence of excommunication wherever he went. Nor could he be absolved from the penalties of his sentence, except by the same authority that had condemned him. No one travelling in foreign countries was entitled to the fellowship of the churches without a pass from his bishop. The want of this was presumptive evidence against him, sufficient to exclude him from their communion. The effect of these regulations was to sustain and enforce the authority of the bishops in their dioceses.¹¹

4. The *Disciplina Arcani*, the sacred mysteries of the church, while they shed an air of awful sanctity over the solemnities of the church, were well suited to inspire

¹¹ Siegel, Handbuch, 1, art. Briefwechsel, Rheinwald's Arch., § 4, p. 99.

the people with a profound veneration for the bishop, who was the high-priest of these rites and the chief agent in administering them.

The discussion of this subject would be altogether foreign to our present object, but it needs no peculiar sagacity, to perceive that the system addressed itself to principles of our nature, which are deep and strong, and which, moved by the ministrations of the bishop, gave him prodigious power over the minds of men. This secret system, wholly unknown in the earlier history of the church, was in a measure matured in the period now under consideration.¹²

5. The catechetical instructions and discipline preparatory to admission into the church, had a powerful influence in giving authority to the doings of the church, and preparing the mind for a passive submission to her jurisdiction.

Throughout the first century Christian converts were received by baptism into the church simply on the ground of their faith in Christ. In the second century some further instruction began to be required; and, in the course of the third and fourth, a long preliminary course of training was required, before the candidates found admission to the church. They were divided into various classes; and, ascending by slow gradations through these, with manifold solemnities, they finally approached the sacred shrine of the church. The details of the system belong to another subject. But every reader, who has the least acquaintance with the antiquities of the church, must readily perceive, that in this long course of discipline, extending often through a series of years, the catechumen might be duly trained to revere the authority of the church, and to submit with all due deference to the agents by whom it was administered. Without the operation of any sinister motive, the natural effect would be to inspire a profound

¹² Comp. our *Christian Antiquities*, c. 1, § 4, pp. 35, 36.

respect, both for the ordinances of the church, and for those who administered them.¹³ "These new regulations," Planck very justly remarks, "were the surest and strongest means man could have devised to give greater importance to the church in the eyes of the new members; and to inspire them with a sense of the importance of the privilege bestowed in receiving them into its communion, which again would revert to the interests of the church."¹⁴

6. To the same effect, also, was all that system of penance, which was matured in connection with the foregoing regulations.

This was wholly unknown in the early period of the church. It was developed in connection with the catechetical discipline which has already been mentioned, and was indeed a part of the same system.¹⁵ It was administered by the bishop, who alone had authority to inflict or to remove these penances.¹⁶ It was a scourge in his hand

¹³ Comp. our Christian Antiquities, c. 2, § 5, pp. 49—57.

¹⁴ Gesell. Verfass., 1, p. 132.

¹⁵ Planck, Gesell. Verfass., 1, pp. 132—141.

¹⁶ The councils of Nice, A. D. 325, c. 5, and of Antioch, A. D. 341, c. 20, make some provision against the flagrant injustice which one might suffer in this way from the bishop. But the council of Elliberis, A. D. 305, and of Sardica, A. D. 347, give to the bishop unlimited authority in this matter. *Osius, episcopus dixit. Hoc quoque omnibus placeat, ut sive diaconus, sive presbyter, sive quis clericorum ab episcopo suo communionem fuerit privatus, et ad alterum perrexerit episcopum, et scierit ille ad quem confugit, eum ab episcopo suo fuisse abjectum, non oportet ut ei communionem indulgeat. Quod si fecerit, sciat se convocatis episcopis causas esse dicturum. Universi dixerunt: Hoc statutum et pacem servabit, et concordiam custodiet, c. 13, (16.)* This was one of the most celebrated councils of the age. It was composed of one hundred and sixty-six bishops convened both from the Eastern and Western churches, at the head of whom was the venerable Hosius, who it would seem proposed it as an expedient to preserve peace and harmony among the bishops.—*Εἰ τις κληρικὸς ἢ λαϊκὸς ἀφορισμένος ᾗτοι ἄδεκτος, ἀπελθὼν ἐν ἑτέρῳ πόλει, δεχθῇ ἄνευ γραμμάτων συστατικῶν, ἀφοριζέσθω καὶ ὁ δεξάμενος καὶ ὁ δεχθεὶς· εἰ δὲ ἀφορισμένος εἴη, ἐπιτενέσθω αὐτῷ ὁ ἀφορισμὸς, ὡς ψευσαμένῳ καὶ ἀπατήσαντι τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ θεοῦ.*—*Can. Apost.*, 12, (13), p. 2.

which he could, at any time, apply upon those who might become the object of his displeasure.

The transgressor who fell under ecclesiastical censure was doomed to a long train of the most humiliating acts, in token of his penitence, better suited by far to illustrate the tremendous power of these bans than to lead him to true repentance. However that may be, a despotic government is strong and stable in proportion to the form of those sanctions, by which it secures obedience to its authority. The rigors of this penance, accordingly, invested the diocesan with authority adequate for the administration of his government.

If any received such an one to his communion he was himself liable to the sentence of excommunication.

II. Results of the diocesan organization.

Under this head we shall confine our attention chiefly to its influence in establishing an aristocracy in the church, and in preparing the way for a full development of the hierarchy, under a metropolitan organization, to which the diocesan soon gave place.

1. It established the pre-eminence of the bishop in the city over the neighboring churches.

The distinction which conventional usage first gave him now became an established right. It was his official prerogative to nominate the presbyters to these churches. These presbyters continued still dependent upon him; and the churches themselves acknowledged a similar relation to the parent church. Thus his became a *cathedral church, ubi cathedra episcopi*, from which the others had proceeded, and to which they acknowledged a filial relation.

2. It was a virtual disfranchisement of the laity.

They had, indeed, a voice in the elections of the bishop; and some little participation still in the management of the

concerns of the church. But the sovereignty of the people was effectually lost. Every thing was carried agreeably to the will of the bishops, who united in themselves the right both to make and to execute the laws for the government of the church. This union of the executive and legislative power in the same persons was subversive of all true religious liberty, as it ever has been of all political freedom. It removed the checks and guards of a popular government against the exercise of arbitrary power. It invested the bishops with prerogatives, which can never be entrusted, with safety, to any man or body of men. The subsequent history of the church abundantly illustrates the disastrous consequences of this surrender of the popular rights into the hands of the clergy. "To revive Christ's church is to expel the Antichrist of the priesthood, which, as it was foretold of him, *as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God*, and to restore its disfranchised members, the laity, to the discharge of their proper duties in it, and to the consciousness of their paramount importance."¹⁷

3. The government was oppressive upon the laity, by entrusting to the bishop exclusively the right of ecclesiastical censure.

This right, again, may have been exercised, at first, with moderation, and often with single regard to the purity of the church and the honor of religion. But it gave the bishops a dangerous control over the private members of the church. It might inspire them with the fear of man, and make them more careful to escape the censure of the diocesan, than anxious to avoid sinning against God. How strictly this prerogative of the bishop was guarded we have already seen. The pass of the bishop was indispensable in all cases to commend a stranger to the fellowship of his Christian brethren. The absence of this was

¹⁷ Christian Life, by Arnold, p. 52.

presumptive evidence against him. Under censure, he had no redress, however unjustly it might have been inflicted; and could only be restored at the pleasure of his own diocesan. Such was the subjugation to which this system of government reduced the laity,—a subjugation, to which the laity of the Episcopal church in America seem to be fast sinking, under the continual encroachments of the bishops upon their rights. “To confine the decisions of all cases which must arise in every well-ordered society, to the clergymen, or to the clergy alone, and thus to consolidate in their hands the entire government of the body, is contrary to the very first law of all society, which provides that no man shall be judge in his own cause. On this principle, there is no society, no freedom, no protection from oppressive and despotic rule, no bulwark against that resistless tide, with which power, when lodged in the hands of a few weak and imperfect men, encroaches upon the territory, and the just rights, of all who are opposed to it. Nor can that ecclesiastical system be possibly republican, or consonant to the genius of our free commonwealths, which subjugates the laity to the clergy, and the inferior clergy, as they are ignobly called, to the higher, and which attaches a supremacy of power to an aristocratic class.”¹⁸

4. It destroyed the independence of the clergy of the diocesan.

They who, by their proximity to the bishop, were brought into familiar intercourse with him, or were not so immediately dependent upon him, still maintained a certain degree of independence. But the principle of subordination, and of subjection to the authority of the diocesan, was inherent in the system, and clearly manifested. His authority was, indeed, far less oppressive than it afterwards became. There was still a strong republican spirit, that could not be worn away, or crushed at once. The

¹⁸ Smyth's *Ecc. Republicanism*, pp. 81, 82.

churches had still some voice in the management of their affairs. They had a right to appoint, and to remove their clergy at pleasure,—a right, which even Cyprian, in the middle of the third century, fully acknowledges. He admits, that the “people, in obedience to the commands of the Lord, and in the fear of God, ought to separate themselves from a minister of an immoral character; nor should they mingle in the services of a sacrilegious priest, for they especially have power to choose the worthy, and to refuse the unworthy.”¹⁹ This right of the church afforded the clergy, also, the means of resisting the encroachments of the bishops, by making interest with the people. It was, accordingly, the policy of the bishops at this time to exercise their authority with moderation.

The presbyters were also the privy counsellors still of the bishop in ecclesiastical matters, and preached, and baptized in common with him, with this distinction, that in the discharge of these duties, the bishop took precedence of the other clergy. Still the authority of the bishop was such as practically to destroy the independence of the clergy; and, in theory, was imperative over them.

But the bishops found means soon to effect the subjection of the clergy to their control. They could, in no instance, travel into a neighboring province without a pass from the bishop. Much less could a presbyter or deacon transfer himself from one church to another, without the bishop's consent. If any one should presume so to do, or if another should receive him who came without the bishop's consent, the consequence was expulsion from his office.²⁰

¹⁹ Propter quod plebs, obsequens praeceptis dominicis et Deum metuens, a peccatore praeposito separare debet, nec se ad sacrilegi sacerdotis sacrificia miserere, quoniam ipsa maxime habeat potestatem vel eligendi dignos sacerdotes, vel indignos recusandi.—*Ep.* 68, p. 118.

²⁰ *Εἰ τις πρεσβύτερος ἢ διάκονος ἢ ὅλως τοῦ καταλόγου τῶν κληρικῶν ἀπολείψας τὴν ἑαυτοῦ παροικίαν εἰς ἑτέραν ἀπέλθῃ, καὶ παντελῶς μεταστὰς διατρέβῃ ἐν ἄλλῃ παροικίᾳ παρὰ γνώμην*

5. It entrusted the bishop with a dangerous prerogative, by giving him the control of the revenue of the church.

This was a prerogative alike dangerous and unjust in its character, and injurious in its practical results. It was an established principle in the polity of the church, at this time, that the bishop, who had the supremacy in spiritual things, ought the more to have the same in things temporal.²¹ Accordingly, the goods and property of the church, its revenues, and receipts of every kind, were submitted to the disposal of the bishop. It was, indeed, expected that they would be used with moderation, and equitably distributed, according to a certain rule. The other clergy were entitled to act in concert with the bishop in the distribution; but there was still abundant opportunity for the exercise of arbitrary power. He was, virtually, amenable to no one, for he could only be impeached by his clergy,

τοῦ ἰδίου ἐπισκόπου· τοῦτον κελεύομεν μηκέτι λειτουργεῖν, μάλιστα εἰ προσκαλούμενου αὐτὸν τοῦ ἐπισκόπου αὐτοῦ ἐπαυελθεῖν οὐχ ὑπήκουσεν ἐπιμένων τῇ ἀταξίᾳ· ὡς λαϊκὸς μέντοι ἐκείσε ποιωνεῖτω.—*Apost. Can.*, 14 (15), *Bruns*, p. 3. Comp., also, *Conc. Antioch*, c. 3. *Laodic.*, c. 42. *Arelat.*, c. 21. *Chalced.*, c. 20. *Nice*, c. 16. *Carthag.*, 1, c. 5. *Sardic.*, 16, 18, &c., &c. *Siegel*, 11, p. 462.

²¹ Πάντων τῶν ἐκκλησιαστικῶν πραγμάτων ὁ ἐπίσκοπος ἔχεται τὴν φροντίδα καὶ διοικεῖται αὐτὰ, ὡς θεοῦ ἐφορῶντος· μὴ ξεῖναι δὲ αὐτῷ σφετερίζεσθαι τι ἐξ αὐτῶν ἢ συγγενέσιν ἰδίοις τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ χαρίζεσθαι· εἰ δὲ πένητες εἴεν, ἐπιχορηγεῖται ὡς πένησιν, ἀλλὰ μὴ προφάσει τοῦτον τὰ τῆς ἐκκλησίας ἀπεμπολεῖται. Προστάτιτον ἐπίσκοπον ἐξουσίαν ἔχειν τῶν τῆς ἐκκλησίας πραγμάτων· εἰ γὰρ τὰς τιμὰς τῶν ἀνθρώπων ψυχὰς αὐτῷ πιστευτόν, πολλῷ ἂν μᾶλλον δεοὶ ἐπὶ τῶν χρημάτων ἐντέλλεσθαι, ὥστε κατὰ τὴν αὐτοῦ ἐξουσίαν πάντα διοικεῖσθαι, καὶ τοῖς δεομένοις διὰ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων καὶ διακόνων ἐπιχορηγεῖσθαι μετὰ φόβου τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ πάσης εὐλαβείας· μεταλαμβάνειν δὲ καὶ αὐτὸν τῶν δεόντων (εἴγε δέοιτο) εἰς τὰς ἀναγκαίας αὐτῷ χρείας καὶ τῶν ἐπιξενουμένων ἀδελφῶν, ὡς κατὰ μηδένα τρόπον αὐτοὺς ὑστερεῖσθαι· ὁ γὰρ νόμος τοῦ θεοῦ διετάξατο, τοὺς τῷ θυσιαστηρίῳ ὑπηρετοῦντας ἐκ τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου τρέφεσθαι· ἐπεὶ περ οὐδὲ στρατιῶται ποτε ἰδίοις ὕπνοις ὄπλα κατὰ πολέμων ἐπιφέρονται.—*Apost. Can.*, 37 (39), 40 (41). *Bruns*, pp. 6, 7.

who received their monthly rations from him, *divisionem mensuram*, and, accordingly, would be slow to endanger their living by exposing themselves to his displeasure. Under these circumstances, they were reduced to a humiliating subordination, which exposed them to the oppressive exactions of arbitrary power, while it gave security to the bishop in the exercise of it. How closely some of our bishops have copied after this odious canon, we have seen at the close of the preceding chapter.

The council of Antioch, A. D. 341, gave the bishops entire control over all the property of the church; and the synod of Gangra, A. D. 362—370, pronounced their solemn anathema upon any one who should either give or receive any of the goods of the church without authority from the bishop.²² The oppressive bearings of this system are clearly and concisely stated by Siegel,²³ and more at length by Planck.²⁴ Without the guidance of another, however, they must be obvious to any one. The subsequent history of the church is the best expositor of this policy; as unjust, as it was impolitic and injurious. "Responsibility to the people, is, therefore, a fundamental principle of republicanism; a responsibility which gives the most insignificant contributor of his money towards any object, a right to examine into the manner in which it is disbursed."²⁵

²² *Εἰ τις καρποφορίας ἐκκλησιαστικὰς ἐθέλοι λαμβάνειν ἢ διδόναι ἔξω τῆς ἐκκλησίας παρὰ γνώμην τοῦ ἐπισκόπου ἢ τῷ ἐγκεχειρισμένου τὰ τοιαῦτα, καὶ μὴ μετὰ γνώμης αὐτῷ ἐθέλοι πράττειν, ἀνάθεμα ἔστω. Εἰ τις διδοῖ ἢ λαμβάνει καρποφορίαν παρ' ἐκτὸς τοῦ ἐπισκόπου ἢ τῷ ἐπιτεταγμένου εἰς οἰκονομίαν εὐποιίας, καὶ ὁ διδοὺς καὶ ὁ λαμβάνων ἀνάθεμα ἔστω.*—*Conc. Gang.*, 7, 8, *Bruns*, p. 108. *Comp. Conc. Aurel.*, 1, c. 14, 15.

²³ *Handbuch*, 11, p. 463.

²⁴ *Gesell. Verfass.*, 1, pp. 381—402.

²⁵ "The great rule of all free institutions,—that the people alone shall lay taxes,—a vital principle of all constitutional government,—an essential guaranty of all safe public administration,—has become involved, is at stake; that solemn canon of republican creeds,—that high fundamental law,—no, sir, not a law, the mere part of a code, or a constitution; it is

6. It gave the bishop unjust power over the clergy, in inflicting upon them ecclesiastical censure.

These censures were, indeed, administered at first with caution, and not without the concurrence of a part, at least, of the clergy and of the church. Such moderation was requisite, to prevent a combination of the clergy and of the people against the bishop; and the more so, before the introduction of that insidious regulation which gave the bishop, who inflicted the penalty, the sole right of removing it at pleasure. This crafty policy, introduced partly by explicit coalition of the bishops, and partly by silent consent, had more influence than any other in completing the subjugation of the clergy, and settling upon the churches the government of an oppressive ecclesiastical aristocracy. The right of appeal to the civil authority was also strictly denied.²⁶

7. It was the occasion, in a great degree, of breaking down the good order and discipline of the church, which had hitherto prevailed.

This was the direct result of those collisions between the bishops and presbyters, to which we have already alluded. "The bishops claimed to have the highest authority, and acted accordingly in the government of the church. The presbyters refused to acknowledge this claim, and strove to make themselves independent of the bishops. This strife between the Presbyterian and Episcopal systems is of the utmost importance in developing the moral and religious state of the church in the third century. Many presbyters made use of their influence to disturb the order and discipline of the church. This strife was in every way injurious to the order and discipline of the church."²⁷

itself a constitution; for, give but that, and a real constitution must follow; take it away, and there is an end of all practical freedom."—Mr. Archer's Speech in Congress, Aug. 1, 1842. See Locke on Government, c. 7, § 94. Works, Vol. II, p. 254.—*Smyth's Eccl. Republicanism*, p. 27.

²⁶ Conc. Antioch, Can. 11.

²⁷ Neander, *Allgem. Kirch. Gesch.*, 1, pp. 329, 330, 2d ed.

CHAPTER IX.

THE METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT.

THIS was a more comprehensive organization, to which the diocesan soon gave place. It is not easy to define with precision the date of its establishment, neither is it important. It was not the production of a day, but the result of a gradual modification of the diocesan government, by a further concentration of Episcopal power, and the extension of its influence over a wider range of territory. These modifications were not altogether the same in every country, nor were they simultaneously effected. The metropolitan government was developed in the Eastern church as early as the first half of the fourth century. The council of Nice, A. D. 325, c. 4, ordered, that the "bishops should in the provinces be subject to the metropolitan;" and again, c. 6, "that no one should be appointed bishop without the consent of the metropolitan." The council of Antioch, A. D. 341, c. 9, defined and established fully the rights of the metropolitan.

The establishment of a hierarchy in the West followed at a period somewhat later. The Christian religion was not introduced so early into these countries as in those of the East. It was still more blended with paganism, especially in the provinces and remote districts; and the government of the churches was more unsettled than in those of the Eastern church. Still it was at different times

finally introduced into the different districts of the Western church.

The capital of the province was not, of necessity, the seat of the metropolitan see, nor did the limits of metropolitan jurisdiction uniformly coincide with those of a province. In Africa peculiar respect was paid to seniority of office. The bishop of Carthage, however, was usually regarded as the primate of the country. This church was also distinguished for its peculiar attachment to the popular freedom of the primitive church; and, to some extent, successfully resisted the encroachments of metropolitan usurpation. It would be interesting to pursue this branch of the subject, and inquire into the causes which led to the selection of the several cities which became the seat, respectively, of the metropolitan see, but we must content ourselves by simply saying, that this distinction was conferred upon Jerusalem, Antioch, Caesarea, Alexandria, Ephesus, Corinth, Rome, Carthage, Lyons, and others. Thus in time the metropolitan government, in place of the diocesan, was settled upon the whole Christian church.

I. Means of its establishment.

The supremacy which the bishops had already acquired, together with the increasing extension of Christianity, soon introduced this organization as a new form of the hierarchy. After becoming the state religion under Constantine, Christianity spread with great rapidity. Small churches became large Christian communities, of sufficient importance to claim the privilege of having bishops of their own, in the place of presbyters. These bishops, however, like the presbyters who preceded them; still sustained certain relations to the bishop of the metropolis, and, in many ways, conceded to him the pre-eminence. It was his prerogative to summon the meetings of the synod, to make the introductory address, to preside over their deliberations, and to

publish the results of their council. The publication of these results made him known in all the churches. All official returns from other churches and councils were also made to him,—all which contributed to establish his superiority, and to give him a controlling influence over the other bishops of the province. These provincial bishops soon began to be emulous of receiving consecration at the hands of the metropolitan; and, accordingly, he began, as opportunity presented, to assume the right of ordaining. Thus the process of centralization went steadily on, widening the circle of its influence, and drawing more under the power of the primate.

This authority was, as yet, wholly conventional, so that his official superiority was virtually conceded to him, and established, before the intention was entertained of confirming it by statute-law. The name of metropolitan had not yet been conferred upon him, but in the councils of this period he is styled *primate*, *primate of the apostolical see*, &c.¹ But about the beginning of the fourth century, the prerogatives of the metropolitan began to be the subject of statute regulations. As in civil matters, the smaller towns and villages were dependent upon the larger, and all mutually dependent upon the capital of the province, so in the church, the country was divided into ecclesiastical districts, corresponding, *even in name*, with those of the state. Thus the church received from the Roman state, without change of signification, the terms, metropolis, diocese, &c.; so that the names of the different orders of the clergy denoted not their *official duties*, so much as their local relations and relative rank. Hence, the names of *rural* and *city* bishops,—*provincial*, *diocesan*, and *metropolitan*.²

¹ Comp. Ziegler's Versuch., pp. 69—71.

² The development of the metropolitan system is briefly stated by Siegel, Handbuch, 11, p. 264, seq.; and more at length, by Planck, Gesell. Verfass., 1, pp. 572—598, and by Ziegler, pp. 61—164.

We are now arrived to that period in the history of the church, in which its government appears almost in total contrast with that of its apostolical and primitive organization. The supreme authority is no longer vested in the church collectively, under a popular administration, but in an ecclesiastical aristocracy, entrusting the government of the church to a clerical hierarchy, who both make and administer the laws, without the intervention of the people. This, then, is a proper point to pause, and contemplate the practical bearings and results of this system of ecclesiastical polity which has taken the place of that which the church originally received at the hands of the apostles.

II. Results of the system.

These may be contemplated in their relations to the laity, to the clergy, and to the general interests of religion.

1. In regard to the laity.

(a) It destroyed the sovereignty of the church as a collective body.

The sovereign authority was formerly vested, not in the apostles, not in the clergy, but in the whole body of the church. They enjoyed the inherent right of all popular assemblies,—that of enacting their own laws and regulations, and of controlling the execution of them, by electing their own officers for the administration of their government. Under the Episcopal government, this cardinal right, the only basis of all rational liberty, civil or religious, was taken away from them. They had no part in framing the rules by which they were governed. Though they still retained some control over the election of their spiritual rulers, the system itself was already a virtual disfranchisement of the people; and finally resulted in the total separation of the people from all part even in the elections to ecclesiastical offices. The law-making power was now entirely in the hands of the bishops, who gave laws to the people, under the sanction of

divine authority, and executed them at their own pleasure. The result is given by Planck, in the following terms: "From the spirit of most of the ordinances which these new lawgivers made for the laity, this much, at least, is apparent from the execution of them, that they were directly designed or adapted to bring the people yet more under the yoke of the clergy, or to give them opportunity more frequently and firmly to exercise their power."³

(b) It exposed the laity to unjust exactions, by uniting the *legislative* and *executive branches* of government.

The union of these has ever been the grand expedient of despotic usurpation; and it holds good, as truly in church as in state, that when those two great departments of government are united in one and the same man, or body of men, the subjugation of the people is well nigh completed. They may have wise and good magistrates, who will graciously extend over them a virtuous administration; but the checks and restraints by which the popular rights are guarded in every free government, are effectually removed. They were thus taken away in the church by the organization now under consideration. The people had no adequate protection against the exercise of arbitrary power, nor any available mode of redress, under the injustice to which they stood exposed.

But the clergy enjoyed many privileges, by which they were, in a measure, withdrawn from the operation of law, on the one hand, and on the other, were entrusted with civil and judicial authority over the laity. Three particulars are stated by Planck.

1. In certain civil cases they exercised a direct jurisdiction over the laity.

2. The state submitted entirely to them the adjudication of all offences of the laity, of a religious nature.

3. Certain other cases, styled ecclesiastical, *causae ecclesiasticae*, were tried before them exclusively.

³ Gesell. Verfass., 1, pp. 452, 453.

The practical bearings of this arrangement, and its effects upon the clergy and the laity, are detailed by the same author, to whom we must refer the reader.⁴

(c) The laity were separated injuriously from the control of the revenues which they contributed, both for the maintenance of the government of the church, and for charitable purposes.

This obnoxious feature in the ecclesiastical polity, which prevailed at this time, has been already mentioned. It is, obviously, an equitable principle, that every man or body of men should themselves be at liberty to do as they will with their own. This principle requires every government that would respect the rights of the people, to submit to them, in some form, the control of the revenue. To deny them this right is injustice, oppression, unmitigated despotism. The hierarchy was a spiritual despotism, which completed the subjugation of the people, by removing them from a just participation in the disbursement of the revenues of the church. All measures of this nature, instead of originating with the people, as in all popular governments, began and ended with the priesthood.⁵ The wealth of the laity was now made to flow in streams into the church. New expedients were devised to draw money from them.⁶ Constantine himself also contributed large sums to enrich the coffers of the church, which he also authorized, A. D. 321, to inherit property by will.⁷ This permission opened new sources of wealth to the clergy, while it presented equal incentives to their cupidity. With what address

⁴ Gesell. Verfass., 1, p. 308, seq.

⁵ Conc. Gan., Can. 7, 8. Bracar. 11, c. 7. The above canons clearly indicate the unjust and oppressive operation of this system.

⁶ It was a law of the church in the fourth century, that the laity should, every Sabbath, partake of the sacrament; the effect of which law was to augment the revenues of the church, each communicant being required to bring his offering to the altar. Afterwards, when this custom was discontinued, the offering was still claimed.—*Cong. Agath.*, A. D. 585, c. 4.

⁷ Cod. Theod. 4, 16, Tit. 2, C. 4. Euseb., 10, 6. Sozomen, Lib. 1, c. 8. Lib. 5, 5.

they employed their newly-acquired rights is apparent from the fact stated by Planck; "that in the space of ten years every man, at his decease, left a legacy to the church; and, within fifty years the clergy, in the several provinces, under the color of the church, held in their possession one *tenth part* of the entire property of the province. By the end of the fourth century, the emperors themselves were obliged to interpose to check the accumulation of these immense revenues:—a measure which Jerome said he could not regret, but he could only regret that his brethren had made it necessary.⁸ Many other expedients were attempted to check this insatiable cupidity, but they only aggravated the evil which they were intended to relieve.

(d) The system in question was not only a violation of the *natural* rights of the laity, but it was equally injurious to their spiritual interests.

If it be important that the people should appoint those who rule over them in civil government, much more is it that they should control the appointment of those who are to be set over them in the Lord. It is a serious objection to this system that it interfered with this religious privilege. The clergy were elected by the bishop, and the bishop again, appointed the clergy. The intervention of the people was often a form, and even the form itself was finally discontinued. A ministry imposed in this manner upon a people, must of necessity be coldly received and comparatively barren in its results. This topic opens a fruitful subject of remark, but it has already come under consideration, and we submit it to the reflections of the reader without further remark.

(e) The tendency of this form of government was to render the laity indifferent to the religious interests of the church.

⁸ Gesell. Verfass., 1, p. 281. Comp. Pertsch, Kirch. Hist., sec. 11, c. 9.

It left them no part in administering the concerns of the church; and the consequence seems inevitable, that they would do little for the promotion of its purity. The moral obligation rested, indeed upon them, to which, however, they must of necessity become in a measure insensible, having little opportunity to act directly in the fulfilment of their duty. If scandals abounded, it belonged not to them to remove them. If a case of discipline occurred, it began and ended with the clergy. Every thing tended to separate the laity from the care of the church; and practically to influence them to neglect the duty of watching and striving together for the maintenance of practical godliness among all its members. Their religious and covenant obligations, if acknowledged, pressed not upon them with the interest of an urgent and present duty. The severity of the penalties which the system of penance inflicted was such also that, by mutual consent, they connived at the offences of the church, and concealed them, to prevent the bishops from exercising their authority in this way; and thus the discipline of the church came to be neglected.

(f) The tendency of the system was to sunder the private members of the church from each other, and to prevent the enjoyment of their mutual fellowship and watchfulness one over the other.

The connection of each member with the church was a transaction between him and his bishop or presbyter. The ordinary members of the church, having no agency in the transaction, could have little oneness of feeling, or union of spirit, with those who were, from time to time, enrolled on the records of the church. They were received to the *ordinances* of the church, rather than to the fellowship, the confidence and affection of brethren, one in heart, in sympathy and Christian love with them. The estrangement under such circumstances is mutual. Nor is it easy to see how there can be that blending of spirit and flow of

love between all of the several members, and that mutual watchfulness for each other's welfare, which Christ designed as one of the richest privileges of Christian fellowship.

The mutual estrangement and the general neglect of Christian watchfulness and discipline which dishonored the church at this time is forcibly exhibited by Eusebius, who lived in the age now under consideration; he says,—“After Christianity through too much liberty was changed into laxness and sloth—then began men to envy and revile one another; and to wound one another as if with arms and spears in actual warfare. Then bishop arose against bishop, and church against church. Great tumult prevailed, and hypocrisy and dissimulation were carried to the highest pitch. And then began the divine vengeance, as is usual, to visit us; and such was the condition of the church that the most part came not freely together.”⁹

“As things now are, all is corrupted and lost. The church is little else than a stall for cattle, or a fold for camels and asses; and when I go out in search of sheep I find none. All are rampant and refractory as herds of horses and wild asses; everything is filled with their abounding corruptions.”¹⁰ Similar sentiments occur abundantly in the writers of the third and fourth centuries and the ages following.

(g) This system was a gross infringement of the right of private judgment in religion.

It was a law strictly enforced that every laymen should be careful blindly to believe, without inquiry, without evidence, all that the church, represented by the bishop in synod, should prescribe. The evidence he was not competent to examine. Here is the origin of that papal policy that denies the Bible to the laity, and the pattern of that “*prudent reserve*” which Puseyism inculcates in preaching the gospel to the common people. The exercise of one's private

⁹ Eccl. Hist., 8, c. 1. ¹⁰ Chrysostom, Hom. 89, in Math., Vol. 7, p. 830.

judgment, leading him to dissent from the prescribed articles, was not only a heinous sin, but a violation of the law of the state, punishable with severe penalties.¹¹

"In endeavoring by the secular arm, to compel all the Christians to entertain the same speculative opinions, the questions then debated, the sovereigns at once turned free discussions into controversy and strife. They inflamed instead of extinguishing party spirit. They formally divided the church into sects. They entailed the disputes of their own times, as an inheritance of sorrow to posterity, and wrote INTOLERANCE over the portal of the house of God."¹²

2. Results of the metropolitan government upon the clergy.

The clergy, under this system, appear in many respects in strong contrast to the ministry of the apostolical and primitive churches.

(a) Their officers are greatly multiplied. Instead of two classes of ecclesiastical officers, as the ordinary ministers of the church, there are now many in different degrees of rank, defined with the precision and guarded with the caution almost of military or naval discipline. The increase of the churches would, of necessity, require a corresponding increase in the number of its ministers. So that even in the second century, there were Christian churches which had twenty or thirty presbyters and sometimes as many deacons.¹³ This latter class however was more generally limited to the number of seven.¹⁴ But we

¹¹ Sozomen, *Eccl. Hist.*, Lib. 7, c. 6. *Codex Theodosian*, L. 16, tit. 3, l. 2.

¹² Rev. Thomas Hardy, cited in *Dr. Brown's Law of Christ*, respecting civil obedience, p. 512.

¹³ *Christ. Antiq. Art. Deacons*, chap. 3, § 10, p. 107, seq.

¹⁴ The church at Rome under Cornelius, A. D. 250, had 46 presbyters, 7 deacons, 7 sub-deacons, 42 clerks, besides 52 exorcists, readers, janitors, &c. Euseb., *Eccl. Hist.*, Lib. 6, c. 43.

have now several entirely new classes of officers in the church, *sub-deacons, acolyths, readers, exorcists, door-keepers, &c.* To these were subsequently added many others, *advocates, ὀνόδοι, apocrisarii, cimeliarchs, custodes, mansionarii, notarii, oiconomoi, syncelli, &c., &c.* The specific duties of these several officers are briefly stated in our Antiquities of the Christian Church,¹⁵ and more at length in the larger works of Bingham, Augusti, Siegel and Boehmer. These new officers, some of which were merely titular, had their origin, not in the exigencies of the church, but from other causes, which indicate still farther changes in the ministry and the existing government, that remain to be mentioned. To one of these, allusion has already been made, but it requires a more specific consideration.

(b) The distinctions between the different orders of the clergy are drawn with great care, and cautiously guarded.

The councils of the period abound with canons defining the boundaries of the respective grades of the clergy. Henceforward history is especially employed in describing their errors and disputes. Gregory Nazianzen, A. D. 360, in view of these ambitious contentions, exclaims, "How I wish there had been no precedence, no priority of place, no authoritative dictatorship, that we might be distinguished by virtue alone. But now this right hand, and left hand, and middle, and higher and lower, this going before and going in company, have produced to us much unprofitable affliction,—brought many into a snare, and thrust them out among the herd of the goats; and they, not only of the inferior order, but even of the shepherds, who, though masters in Israel, have not known these things."¹⁶ "I am worn out—with contending against the envy of the holy bishops; disturbing the public peace by their contentions, and subordinating the Christian faith to their own private interests." . . . "If I must write the whole truth, I am de-

¹⁵ Chapter IV, pp. 119—130.

¹⁶ Orat. 23, Vol. I, p. 434.

terminated to absent myself from all assemblies of the bishops; for I have never seen a happy result of any councils, nor any that did not occasion an increase of evils, rather than a reformation of them by reason of these pertinacious contentions, and this vehement thirst for power, such as no words can express."¹⁷

(c) The clergy manifest a strong party feeling.

There is an *esprit du corps*, which separates them in interest and feeling from the lower orders, and from the church. They have become one party, and the church another; each with their separate interests. And these too often are contrary, the one to the other. This spirit manifested itself particularly in their synods, where the bishops sought to depress as much as possible the other orders of the clergy. Even when they had occasion to inflict censure upon their own number, the hierarchy never forgot the interests of their order, in respect to the other.¹⁸ On the other hand, many rules were prescribed regulating the relative rank of the presbyters, deacons and subordinate officers; and the violating of these rules was punished with increasing frequency and severity. For proof of this reference may be had to the councils of Elvira, Neocaesarea and Nice.¹⁹

"They (the bishops) had the means of carrying any measure for their own advantage; and, while they continued united, it was not easy for a whole church, even, and much more, for a single individual of the clergy, or of the laity, to oppose them. Even if a whole church came into collision with their bishop, they must submit to the decision of the provincial synod, of the metropolitan, and also of his fellow-bishops. The danger was, that these all, and even the churches of the province, would agree in a

¹⁷ Ep. Philagrio, 65, al. 59, p. 823, and Ep. Procopio, 55, al. 42, p. 814.

¹⁸ Conc. Antioch., c. 2, Synod. Gangr., c. 7, 8. Conc. Chalcedon, c. 8.

¹⁹ Comp. Conc. Laodic., c. 20, 42, 56.

coalition against the party who began the prosecution ; so that, in the end, they would be excluded from the bonds of Christian fellowship. Who can suppose that the bishops could be men, and not act, in such circumstances, for the interest of their order?"²⁰

Is it at all easier now for a layman to oppose successfully the will of the bishop ? Is not his authority as absolute now as then, and his will as certainly carried into effect ? Let the doings of the late convention at New York be consulted for a reply.

(d) Under these circumstances, strong temptations are presented to the lower orders, to become the sycophants of the higher for the promotion of their own interests.

The inevitable consequence of entrusting the offices of the church to the arbitrary disposal of the bishops, is to surround them with a crowd of sycophants, eager to secure their favor.

"They flatter the rulers, they affectionately salute the influential, they carefully wait upon the rich ; the glory of God they disregard ; his worship they defile, religion they profane, Christian love they destroy. Their ambition is insatiable ; they are ever striving after honor and fame. They aspire to be high in office ; and, to accomplish this end, spare not to excite the worst of enmities among the best of friends."²¹ This is said by a Roman bishop, of his own clergy ; and Gregory of Nazianzen, at an earlier period, charges them with flattering the great and crouching to them in every way. But when they had others in their power, then were they more savage than lions ; and joined one party or another for the slightest reasons, like the polypus that can assume any color according to circum-

²⁰ Planck, *Gesell. Verfass.*, 1, p. 179. Comp. p. 129. Ziegler's *Versuch.*, &c., pp. 56, 57.

²¹ Leo VII, *Epist. ad Episc. Bavar. ap. Aventinum et in Catal. Test. Vet.*, p. 209. Cited in Arnold's *Wahre Abbildung*, p. 919.

stances.²² At another time he describes them as "seducing flatterers, flexible as a bough, savage as a lion to the weak, cringing as a dog to the powerful, who knock at the doors, not of the learned, but of the great, and value highest, not what is useful, but what is pleasing to others."²³

"Wherever," says Robert Hall, "religion is established by law, with splendid emoluments and dignities annexed to its profession, the clergy, who are candidates for these distinctions, will ever be prone to exalt the prerogative, not only in order to strengthen the arm on which they lean, but that they may the more successfully ingratiate themselves in the favor of the prince, by flattering those ambitious views and passions which are too readily entertained by persons possessed of supreme power. The boasted alliance between church and state, on which so many encomiums have been lavished, seems to have been little more than a compact between the priest and the magistrate to betray the liberties of mankind, both civil and religious. To this the clergy on their part at least have continued steady, shunning inquiry, fearful of change, blind to the corruptions of government, skilful to *discern the signs of the times*, and eager to improve every opportunity, and to employ all their art and eloquence to extend the prerogative and smooth the approaches of arbitrary power."

(e) It is an objectionable feature of this system, that the clergy are entrusted with the exercise of both ecclesiastical and civil powers.

Constantine gave to the bishops the right of deciding in secular matters, making them the highest court of judicature, and ordering that their judgment should be final and decisive as that of the emperor himself, *καίτω τῆς τῶν ἄλλων δικαστῶν ὡσανεὶ παρὰ τοῦ βασιλέως ἐξενεχθεῖσαν*,

²² Objurgat. in cler. Cited in Wahre Abbildung, p. 918.

²³ De Episcopis, p. 1031. Ed. Basil., 1571. Ed. Colon., 1590, Vol. II, p. 304.

whose officers were required to execute accordingly these decisions.²⁴

To what height the authority of the clergy finally rose in the government of the state we need not say. With the union of church and state under Constantine, the way was opened for the exercise of clerical influence in many ways, over the secular interests of both. Enough was done to excite in the bishops an ambition for worldly power, and scope sufficient was given for the play of these dangerous passions. The details we must leave the reader to pursue in the histories of the church. Siegel has mentioned one crafty device, which sufficiently discovers the aspirations of prelatical ambition after political power. This was the rule which required "the subordinate clergy to obtain permission from the metropolitan to pay their visits to the emperor." The manifest design of this expedient was to overrule the appeals of the inferior clergy to Cæsar, by embarrassing them in their approaches to him. In short, the policy of the bishops was to embarrass others as much as possible, in making appeal to the civil authority, while they themselves employed it to accomplish their own party purposes. "The bishop, for example, has some measure to carry, which he foresees will be opposed by others. He goes, therefore, to the palace and obtains from the emperor a decree in his own name, formed agreeably to the will of the bishops. At another time, a new doctrine is to be put forth under the sanction of the whole church, as an article of faith. From this others dissent, and declare it to be erroneous. The bishop now makes interest at the palace, either to have a synod called by authority of the emperor to decide the point, or a decree comes direct from the court, declaring the article in question *orthodox*, and denouncing all who dissent from it as heretics. More frequently a presbyter would be a bishop,

²⁴ Sozomen, Lib. 1, c. 29. Com. Valesius in Euseb., De Vit. Const., c. 27.

or a bishop of a small and feeble church would be promoted to a higher and richer. But seeing that this in the ordinary course of things cannot be accomplished, he applies again to the palace, and has the address to obtain a recommendation, which has all the form of a command, or else an explicit decree, by virtue of which, without further trouble, he is advanced to his desired place.

Hundreds of cases to this effect occur in the history of the fourth and fifth century. And all this, as any one must see, was entirely natural, according to the ordinary course of things. When so often availing themselves of this right of appeal to the emperors as they did, could the bishops fail to remember they could in this way, not only serve the church, but promote also their own convenience, and the furtherance of their designs?"²⁵

(f) A secular, mercenary spirit now dishonors the clergy.

The history of the times abounds with examples of the clergy who neglected or forsook their sacred duties to engage in secular pursuits for mercenary purposes. So prevalent was this spirit among the clergy, that the council of Eliberis, A. D. 305, saw reason to rebuke and restrain it, by requiring them, if they must engage in trade, to confine their operations to their own province.²⁶

"The church that before by insensible degrees welked and impaired, now with large steps went down hill decaying; at this time Antichrist began first to put forth his horn, and that saying was common, that former times had wooden chalices and golden priests; but they, golden chalices and wooden priests. 'Formerly,' says Sulpitius, 'martyrdom by glorious death was sought more greedily

²⁵ Planck, *Gesell. Verfass.*, 1, pp. 269—271. Comp. pp. 453, 454.

²⁶ Conc. Eliberis, c. 4, Comp. Conc. Aurel., 3, c. 27. Basil the Great complains that some of the bishops administered ordination for hire,—making even this "grace" an article of merchandize. A practice which he justly condemns.—*Ep.* 53, Vol. III, p. 147.

than now bishoprics by vile ambition is hunted after,' speaking of these times; and in another place, 'they gape after possessions, they tend lands and livings, they cover over their gold, they buy and sell; and if there be any that neither possess nor traffic, that which is worse, they sit still and accept gifts, and prostitute every endowment of grace, every holy thing to sale.' And in the end of his history thus he concludes; 'All things went to rack by the faction, wilfulness and avarice of the bishops; and by this means God's people and every good man was held in scorn and derision.'"²⁷

(g) The disposition of the bishops to torture and pervert the language of Scripture to give importance to their order, is worthy of particular notice.

Their reference to the Jewish priesthood, and the analogies which they sought from the Mosaic economy to justify their own ecclesiastical polity, have been already mentioned. From the same source sprang the conceit of the divine right of Episcopacy, of the apostolical succession, and of the validity and necessity of Episcopal ordination. On these topics another shall speak whose sentiments have been so often cited, and who has written on the constitution of the church more at length and with greater ability than any other historian. After adverting to their reference to the Jewish priesthood, to the transfer of the names of that priesthood to the clergy of the Christian church, and to the analogies which were sought out between the chief priests of the temple, and the bishops of the church, Planck proceeds to say;—"It is easy to see, and was foreseen, what advantages they might gain if they could once bring this notion into circulation—that the bishops and presbyters were set apart, not by the church, *but by God himself*;²⁸—that they held their office, and the rights of

²⁷ Milton's Prose Works, Vol. I, p. 22.

²⁸ It was a favorite sentiment of Cyprian, that God makes the priests. *Deus qui sacerdotes facit.*—*Epist.* 69, 52.

their office, from God and not from the church—that they were not the servants of the church, but ordained of God to be its overseers, and appointed by him to be the guardians of its sanctity—that the service of the ministry for this new religion must be performed altogether by them, and by their body—and, therefore, that they must of necessity constitute themselves a distinct order, and form a separate caste in the church;—all this was clearly manifest to their minds; and, accordingly, they sought out with all diligence, the analogies from which all these consequences could so easily be drawn.

“In view of the obvious advantages which the bishops would gain from the prevalence of such sentiments, one is not surprised that Cyprian sought so much to propagate them in his day. Having, therefore, so much interest in the promulgation of these sentiments, from which proceeded, as a necessary consequence, the *divine right* of their office, the bishops found means more fully to establish them by claiming to be *the successors of the apostles*. They accordingly began now, for the first time, to promulgate, with a specific intent, this doctrine of the apostolical succession. The bishops had, indeed, from the beginning of the second century,²⁹ appropriated to themselves the title of the successors of the apostles, but it occurred to no one, and least of all to them, that they had of right inherited the authority of the apostles, and were instated in all their rights. These claims, however, were not only put forth before the middle of the third century as an acknowledged right, but the bishops carefully availed them-

²⁹ This author supposes the distinction between bishop and presbyter to have prevailed from the beginning—a distinction, however, appropriately implying no official superiority. “The bishop perhaps regarded himself as somewhat different from a presbyter, but not at all superior to him. He thought himself more than a presbyter, only inasmuch as he had more to do than a presbyter.”—p. 31.

selves of the advantages resulting from an inheritance of the apostolical succession.

"One of the advantages claimed was the exclusive right of ordination. This favorite doctrine has ever since held a conspicuous place among their rights in the church. Indeed, it has been the ruling sentiment of the Episcopal hierarchy,—the foundation of this entire theory of an ecclesiastical ministry. The church were taught to believe that the right in question was borrowed from the ancient Jews; and that the apostles, by means of it, had originally inducted bishops and presbyters into office.³⁰ They were taught that the laying on of hands was, not merely a symbolical rite, but that it must be regarded as a religious act, having in itself a certain efficacy, by which the individual upon whom it had been rightly performed was not only invested with all the rights of the office, but was also rendered competent to impart to others the same clerical grace. In a word, a mysterious and supernatural power was ascribed to this laying on of hands, by which the Holy Spirit was transmitted to the person who received ordination from them; just as the apostles, by the laying on of their hands, communicated the gift of working miracles. Acts 8: 17. 10: 47.

"When once the bishop had come to be regarded as the *successors* of the apostles, they could easily lay claim also to the prerogatives and gifts of the apostles. Hence the doctrine that none but the bishops could administer a valid ordination; for they, by being constituted the successors of the apostles, had alone the power, by the laying on of the hands, to impart a similar gift, with ability to transmit it unimpaired to others. In order more deeply to impress the new doctrine upon the minds of the people, or to inspire them with a firmer belief in it, they took care

³⁰ Potestas Apostolis data est. . . . et episcopis, qui eis vicaria ordinatione successerunt.—*Cyprian*, Ep. 75.

also to administer the rite of ordination with the appearance of greater formality and solemnity. This, in all probability, was the true reason for the custom of saying, in the laying on of the hands, *Accipe Sanctum Spiritum, Receive the Holy Ghost!*

"In the same connection came also the suggestion, that it was important, not merely for the bishops, but for the presbyters and deacons also to receive ordination.³¹ They were accordingly ordained. The subordinate orders who had lately been instituted in the clergy, received also a kind of ordination. For, so far as the people could be impressed with a sense of the mysterious influence of this ceremony, they would regard him who had received the ordinance as another being, no longer on an equality with them; and so the great end designed by all these things would be accomplished—that of impressing more deeply upon the minds of the people that the clergy are a peculiar class of persons, set apart by God himself as a distinct order in the church."³²

(h) The clergy manifest an intolerant, persecuting spirit.

It is the legitimate effect of such pretensions as have been specified in the foregoing article. Dissent from their doctrines becomes a denial of God's truth; disobedience to their authority, rebellion against God; and heresy, the most heinous of sins. Accordingly, the great strife now is to guard against the spread of heretical opinions. He who ventures to promulgate them, fails not to draw down upon himself the severest penalties of prelatical power. The history of the church, from the fourth century, downward, is little else than a tedious recital of endless discussions of

³¹ Cyprian at least admonished the deacons to remember that God appointed the apostles, i. e., the *bishops*, but the deacons were constituted the ministers of the church by the apostles. *Apostolos, id est episcopos Dominus elegit; Diaconos autem apostoli sibi constituerent ministros.—Ep. 9.*

³² Gesell. *Verfass.*, 1, pp. 157—163.

forms of expression and of doctrines, by which the church is perpetually agitated; together with a humiliating exhibition of the bigotry and fiery zeal with which the charge of heresy was prosecuted. Many, according to Epiphanius, were expelled from the church for a single word or two, which, in the phraseology of it, might seem to be contrary to the faith.³³ The charges were frequently groundless, often contemptible; and so multifarious, withal, that it might be difficult to say what in human conduct or belief has not been branded as heresy. For a priest to appear in worship without his surplice was heresy.³⁴ To fast on Saturday or Sunday, "heresy, and a damnable thing."³⁵ And yet this indefinite, indescribable sin, called heresy, was enough, not only to expel one from the church, but to drive him into exile from his kindred and his country, the victim of relentless intolerance. This zeal for truth was quickened, also, by that avarice which seized upon his house, his lands, his property of every description, and confiscated it for the benefit, ostensibly, of the church, but really, as a gratuity to the pious zeal of his clerical persecutors.³⁶ When this failed to reach him, the arm and the sword of civil justice were invoked against him. Thus was he persecuted, even until, and unto death, by the exterminating zeal of prelatical bigotry. The reader will find in the Codex of Theodosius enough to verify all; and much more than has been said on this subject; or in the ancient history of Socrates, to say nothing of the modern histories of Neander, and others.

³³ Epist. ad Johan. Hieros., Vol. II, Op., p. 314. The least deviation from the prescribed formularies and creeds of the church was heresy, according to the famous law of Arcadius, A. D. 395. "Haeritici sunt qui vel levi argumente a iudicio catholicae religionis et tramite detecti fuerint deviare. —*Cod. Theodos.*, L. 16, tit. V, de Haeret., 6, 28.

³⁴ Apoph. Pat. apud Cotelerium, T. 1, Mon. Graec., p. 684.

³⁵ Nomo Canon, Gr. apud eundem, c. 129.

³⁶ *Cod. Theodós.*, L. 16, tit. 5, 6, 43, 52, 57. Socrat., 7, 7. A full statement of these persecutions is given in Vol. VI, p. 118. Leipsic, 1743.

And yet, under this treatment, as might have been foreseen, heresies came up into the church like the frogs of Egypt. Epiphanius, who, in the fourth century, wrote several books against heresies, announces no less than *eighty distinct kinds of heresy*. But the most obnoxious feature of this rage against heresy, is, that it often became only a persecuting intolerance of the pious, whose religious life rebuked the godless ministry that was over them. "One may see," says Jerome, "in most of the cities, bishops and presbyters, who, when they perceive the laity to seek the society of the pious, and hospitably to entertain them, immediately become jealous, and murmur against them, lay them under bans, and thrust them out of the church; so that one can do no more than what the bishop or overseer does. But to live a virtuous life is sure to provoke the displeasure of these priests; so unmerciful are they towards these poor men, and seize them by the neck, as if they would draw them away from all that is good, and harass them with all manner of persecutions."³⁷

3. State of religion under the hierarchy.

The preceding remarks have been made, with reference, particularly, to the mutual relations of the clergy and the laity under this government, and the practical effects of it upon them both. The inquiry now is, in regard to their religious character, and the state of morals and religion generally in the church. One might gladly pass in silence over this view of the subject. We surely have no pleasure in contemplating the deformities of the Christian character, in any circumstances; much less in reciting the general degeneracy of the church in this age, and the shocking immoralities which so frequently dishonored the lives of all classes, both of the clergy and the people. One might almost wish, that, in the lapse of time, a veil, even of deeper darkness, had been spread over the church, so that her

³⁷ Comment. in Epist. 1 ad Tit.

deformity had been seen no more. But it is seen and known; and it remains for us to pause, not to exult over the fall of the church, but to take warning from the example, and to guard against a similar catastrophe.

The great evil of her organization was, that it opened the way for the introduction of irreligious men into the ministry, and offered many inducements to them to enter into the sacred service of the church. It offered to the aspiring the fairest prospect of preferment to honor, wealth, and power, both civil and ecclesiastical; and the necessary consequence was a degenerate ministry. Planck, with great propriety, remarks: "It was a thing of course, that all would strive for admission into that order which was in the enjoyment of such wealth, and power, and distinction."³⁸ This was the great evil of this whole system of church government. *Hinc illi prima mali labes*,—hence, the source and fountain of that tide of corruption which came in upon the church like an overwhelming flood.³⁹ The instances that have already been mentioned, clearly indicate the degeneracy of the clergy, which appears more fully in the following particulars.

(a) Their pride; their haughty, supercilious, and ostentatious bearing.

Every effort was made to exalt the dignity of the bishops. They assumed the title of priests, high-priests, apostles, successors of the apostles; their highness, their excellence, their worthiness, their reverence, the enthroned, the height of the highest dignity, the culminating point of pontifical glory;—these are the terms of base adulation employed to set forth the dignity of these ministers of Christ.⁴⁰ They have a separate seat, and a *princely throne* in the church.

³⁸ Gesell. Verfass., 1, 332.

³⁹ Comp. Mosheim, *De Rebus Christ.*, Saec. III, § 25.

⁴⁰ Pertsch, *Can. Recht.*, 49. More at length, in his *Kirch. Hist.*, Saec. II, c. 3, § 15, 16, 18.

All rise to do them reverence as they come in, and stand until the bishops are seated, and often are required to *stand* in the presence of the bishops.⁴¹ They are decked out in gorgeous apparel, and even suspend sacred relics from their shoulders, to impress the multitude with a more profound reverence for their order.⁴² "The bishops," says Jerome, A. D. 400, "by their pride and their base deeds, are a reproach to their name. In the place of humility they manifest pride, as though they had acquired honor and not disgrace; and whenever they perceive one to have gained an influence by rightly handling the word of God, they seek, by detraction, to oppose him. The people of God are dispersed by the abounding immoralities and heresies of the day, while no good shepherd appears, to lay down his life for the sheep; but they are all hirelings, watching only for gain from the flock, and when they see the wolf coming they flee."⁴³

⁴¹ The following canon of the council of Maçon, A. D. 581, dictated, as they gravely tell us, by the Holy Spirit, is sufficient to illustrate the artifices of this kind to secure the respect of the people:—*Et quia ordinationi sacerdotum annuente deo congruit de omnibus disponere et causis singulis honestum terminum dare, ut per hos reverentissimos canones et praeteritorum canonum viror ac florida germina maturis fructibus enitescant, statuimus ut si quis saecularium quempiam clericorum honoratorum in itinere obvium habuerit, usque ad inferiorem gradum honoris veneranter sicut condecet Christianum illi colla subdat, per cujus officia et obsequia fidelissima christianitatis jura promeruit. Et si quidem ille saecularis equo vehitur clericusque similiter, saecularis galerum de capite auferat et clerico sinceræ salutationis munus adhibeat. Si vero clericus pedes graditur et saecularis vehitur equo sublimis, illico ad terram defluat et debitum honorem praedicto clerico sinceræ caritatis exhibeat, ut deus, qui vera caritas est, in utrisque laetetur, et dilectioni suae utrumque adsciscat. Qui vero haec quae spiritu sancto dictante sancita sunt transgredi voluerit, ab ecclesiae quam in suis ministris dehonorat, quamdiu episcopus illius ecclesiae voluerit suspendatur.*—C. 15, *Bruno*, Vol. II, p. 254. The gradations of rank, which were observed with so much precision, were made subservient to the same end, and indicate the same spirit. Comp. Planck, 1, p. 358—368.

⁴² Conc. Bracar., 3, c. 5.

⁴³ Lib. 2, in *Ezech.*, c. 34, Vol. III, p. 943.

(b) Their ignorance, and incompetence rightly to discharge the duties of their office.

The clerical office, and especially that of a bishop, has become an object of covetous desire, for reasons wholly unlike those which made it desirable in the eyes of the apostle. The consequence is, that by favoritism, intrigue, and cunning, many find their way into office who are wholly unqualified for it; and the church is afflicted with an incompetent and unworthy ministry.⁴⁴ While mere boys, they were sometimes invested with the clerical office, so that the fourth council of Toletum, A. D. 633, very properly provides for their education, and training for their duties.⁴⁵ "No physician," says Gregory Nazianzen, A. D. 370, "finds employment until he has acquainted himself with the nature of diseases; no painter, until he has learned to mix colors, and acquired skill in the use of his pencil. But a bishop is easily found. No preparation is requisite for his office. In a single day we make one a priest, and exhort him to be wise and learned, while he knows nothing, and brings no needful qualification for his office, but a desire to be a bishop."⁴⁶ They are teachers, while yet they have to learn the rudiments of religion. Yesterday, impenitent, irreligious; and to-day, priests; old in vice; in knowledge, young."⁴⁷ "They are, in their ministry, dull; in evil speaking, active; in study, much at leisure; in seductions, busy; in love, cold; in factions, powerful; in hatred and enmity, constant; in doctrine, wavering. They profess to govern the church, but have need themselves to be governed by others."⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Conc. Tol., 4, c. 19.

⁴⁵ Nos, et divinae legis, et conciliorum praecepti immemores infantes et pueros, levitas facimus ante legitimam aetatem ante experientiam vitae.—*Conc. Tol.*, 4, c. 20.

⁴⁶ Orat. 20, De Basil., Ed. Colon., 1590, p. 335.

⁴⁷ Orat. 21. In laud Athanas., p. 378.

⁴⁸ Sidonius Apollinaris, A. D. 486, Lib. 7, Ep. 9. *Biblioth. Vet. Pat.* VI, p. 1112. Comp. Mosheim, De Rebus Christ., Saec. III, § 26.

(c) The total neglect of Christian discipline, and the general corruption of the church, are the necessary consequences of a secular ministry.

In this respect, the state of the church appears in melancholy contrast with its early purity. "Formerly, the church of Christ was distinguished from the world by her piety. Then, the walk of all, or of the most Christians was holy, unlike that of the irreligious. But now are Christians as base, and, if possible, even worse than heretics and heathen."⁴⁹ "How unlike themselves are Christians now," says Salvianus, A. D. 460. "How fallen from what they once were! when we might rejoice, and account the church as quite pure, if it had only as many good as bad men in it. But it is hard and sad to say, that the church, which ought, in all things, to be well pleasing to God, does little else than provoke his displeasure."⁵⁰ This is but a faint sketch of his complaint. Much more to the same effect is said by this writer, and confirmed by others, which we gladly pass in silence. Enough of this sad tale of the degeneracy of the church, of which the half has not been told. "No language," says Chrysostom, "can describe the angry contentions of Christians, and the corruption of morals that prevailed, from the time of Constantine to that of Theodosius."⁵¹

Of grosser enormities we forbear to speak. Much that is recorded, both of the clergy and the people, in the period now under consideration, cannot, with propriety, be transferred to these pages. Suffice it to say, there is evidence enough to show that a shocking degeneracy of morals pervaded all classes of society. It began, confessedly, with the clergy,—in their worldliness and irreligion, their neglect of duty, their departure from the faith, and corrupt

⁴⁹ Chrysostom, Hom. 49, in Math., Vol. VI, p. 204. Opus imp., Hom. in Ps. 61, Vol. I, p. 195.

⁵⁰ Lib. 6. De Gub. Dei in Biblioth. Pat. Vet., Vol. VIII, p. 362, seq.

⁵¹ Hom. 49, in Math., p. 202. Opus imperfectum.

example.⁵² From the time of Constantine, the tide of corruption, which had begun to set in upon the church, became deep and strong, and continued to rise and swell, until it had well-nigh overwhelmed the church. There were still examples, of men high in office in the church, who nobly strove to turn back this flood of iniquity; but they too frequently strove in vain, as their lamentations over the degeneracy of the church too plainly show. In the church of Christ there still remained, no doubt, many of his faithful followers, who have, in heaven, their high reward, however history may have failed to record the honored memorial of their virtues.

Wearied, however, with the oppressive hand of prelatical power that was upon her, and sickened at the sight of the ungodliness which had come up into the church, and sat enthroned in her high places, the pure spirit of piety withdrew, in silent sadness, from the church to the cloistered cell, drew the curtains, and reposed in her secret recess, through the long night of darkness that settled upon the world.

This religious declension, of which we have spoken, it should be well considered, could not have come over the church so generally through the operation of any one cause alone. It is the combined result of various causes. But that the ecclesiastical polity that early supplanted the government originally established by the apostles, was one efficient cause of this degeneracy, we cannot doubt. It filled the church with corrupt and unworthy members, and gave her an ignorant, ambitious priesthood, equally degenerate and corrupt.

The object of the Christian emperors was to bring all their subjects to embrace Christianity. But they totally mistook the means by which this work was to be accom-

⁵² Chrysostom expressly says, that they were the cause of this degeneracy of the laity. In Math. 23. Comp., also, Catal. Test. Verit., p. 77.

plished. They sought to do it by state patronage; by making a professed faith in Christ the passport to favor and to power. To enter into the church of Christ, was, accordingly, to enjoy the favor and protection of the government; to hold her offices, was to bear rule in the state. The consequence was, that multitudes pressed up to the altar of the Lord, eager to be invested with the robes and the office of the Christian ministry, who had nothing of its spirit.⁵³

Such was the wayward policy, the fatal mistake of the first Christian emperors. Such were its disastrous results. My kingdom, saith Christ, is not of this world. Christianity, though mingling freely in the affairs of men, like its great Author, works its miracles of mercy and of grace, by powers that are hidden and divine. It stoops to no carnal policy, no state chicanery, no corrupt alliances; while, like an angel of mercy, it goes through the earth, for the healing of the nations. To borrow the profound thoughts and beautiful language of Robert Hall, "Christianity will civilize, it is true; but it is only when it is allowed to develop the energies by which it sanctifies. Christianity will inconceivably ameliorate the condition of being. Who doubts it? Its universal prevalence, not in name, but in reality, will convert this world into a semi-paradisaical state; but it is only while it is permitted to prepare its inhabitants for a better. Let her be urged to forget her celestial origin and destiny,—to forget that she came from God, and returns to God; and, whether employed by the artful and enterprising, as the instrument of establishing a spiritual empire and dominion over mankind, or by the philanthropist, as the means of promoting their civilization and improvement,—she resents the foul indignity, claps her wings and takes her flight, leaving nothing but a base and sanctimonious hypocrisy in her room."⁵⁴

⁵³ Comp. Sermon by Thomas Hardy, D. D. Cited in Dr. Brown's *Law of Christ*, pp. 511, 512.

⁵⁴ Address to Eastace Carey.

CHAPTER X.

THE PATRIARCHAL AND THE PAPAL GOVERNMENT.

I. THE patriarchal government.

This form of the hierarchy we shall dismiss with a very brief notice. The principles on which it was based, and its characteristics, were essentially the same as those of the metropolitan. The state of the church under this organization has of necessity been anticipated in the preceding remarks. It was only a farther concentration of ecclesiastical power, another stage in the process of centralization, which was fast bringing the church under the absolute despotism of papacy. Man naturally aspires to the exercise of arbitrary power; or, if he must divide his authority with others, he seeks to make that number as small as possible. This disposition had already manifested itself in the church. In many of the provinces there were ecclesiastical aspirants among the higher orders of the clergy, who, even to the fifth century, had not established an undisputed title to the prerogatives of metropolitans. But the continual search and strife of the bishops for a greater consolidation of ecclesiastical power ended in the establishment of an ecclesiastical oligarchy in the fifth century, under the form of the patriarchal government.¹

¹ Comp. Planck, *Gesell. Verfass.*, 1, pp. 593—624. Ziegler's *Versuch*, &c., pp. 164—365.

In the course of the period from the fourth to the sixth century, arose four great ecclesiastical divisions, whose primates bore the title of patriarch. These were Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria and Antioch. Few topics of antiquity have been the subject of so much controversy as that relating to the patriarchal system, as may be seen in the works of Salmasius, Petavius, Sismondi, Scheelstrate, Richter and others. Suffice it to say, however, that the council of Chalcedon, A. D. 451, established five patriarchates. The councils of Nice, A. D. 325, c. 6, 7, of Constantinople I, A. D. 381, c. 2, 5, and of Ephesus, A. D. 531, Act. 7, had already conferred the distinction without the title. The incumbents of these Episcopal sees were already invested with civil powers. Theodosius the Great conferred upon Constantinople the second rank, a measure greatly displeasing to Rome, and against which Alexandria and Antioch uniformly protested. Jerusalem had the honor and dignity of a patriarchate, but not the rights and privileges.²

The aspirations of prelatical ambition after sole and supreme power are sufficiently manifest in that bitter contest, which was so long maintained by the primates of Rome and Constantinople, for the title of universal patriarch or head of the church universal.³ Great political events finally decided this controversy in the course of the fifth and sixth centuries in the West, and in the East in the seventh century in favor of the church of Rome. This decision resulted in the supremacy of the Pope and the establishment of the papal system.

² Hence the Romans were accustomed to say, *Patriarchae en ecclesia primitus fuere, tres per se et ex natura sua,—Romanus, Alexandrinus et Antiochenus; duo per accidens, Constantinopolitanus et Hierosolymitanus.* Comp. Justinia., Nov. Constit., 123. Schroekhs, Kirch. Gesch. Thl., 17, pp. 45, 46. Comp. Art. Patriarch, in the works of Augusti, Siegel, Rheinwald, W. Bohmer, &c.

³ *Πατριάρχης τῆς οἰκουμένης*, *episcopus oecumenicus, universalis ecclesiae, papa, &c.*

II. The papal government.

This was the last refinement of cunning and self-aggrandizement; the culminating point of ecclesiastical usurpation, towards which the government of the church under the Episcopal hierarchy had been approaching for several centuries. It was an ecclesiastical monarchy, a spiritual despotism, which completed the overthrow of the authority of the church as a sovereign and independent body.⁴

The bishop of Rome was originally indebted, for his authority and power, to the emperor of the East; an indebtedness which he continued for some time to feel. The bishop of Constantinople, on the other hand, acted with more independence. In some instances, he successfully resisted the will of the emperor. But the decline of the Eastern empire greatly promoted the ambitious designs of the bishop of Rome, and the extension of his power in Italy. Meanwhile the territorial government of the Eastern church was greatly reduced in the seventh and eighth centuries; the hopes of Constantinople and of her patriarch suffered a corresponding reduction. Territory after territory fell away and was lost. The dioceses of Antioch, Jerusalem and Alexandria were overrun with Mahomedanism. Thrace became tributary to Bulgaria, and Constantinople herself was brought into conflict with the Sacarens.

The bishop of Rome now began his splendid career. It commenced with the overthrow of the emperor's authority in Italy, and ended in results auspicious to this aspiring prelate beyond his most ardent expectation. The incursion of the Longobards into Italy favored greatly the designs of the Roman bishop; so that without the concurrence of this invasion he might never have realized the fulfilment of his hopes. The important results of this circumstance to the Pope, the decline of the Eastern empire

⁴ Comp. Planck, *Gesell. Verfass.*, 1, pp. 624—673. Ziegler's *Versuch.*, &c., pp. 365—402.

by the falling off of different provinces, and the influence of Gregory and Zacharius in promoting the papal supremacy by means of the war respecting image worship and other devices, is very clearly exhibited by Ziegler.⁵ But Gregory III surpassed all his predecessors by his political manœuvres. After making use of the invasion of the Longobards to reduce the power of the emperor, he took care to have them removed from the neighborhood of Rome, if not from all Italy. Their presence had been the means of inspiring the people with a belief in the holiness of the Pope. The Franks were also deeply impressed with the same sentiments. It was accordingly the policy of Gregory to throw himself into the arms of the brave Charles Martell, that so the *secular* government of Rome might be removed as far as possible from the city. His next political manœuvre was, by the aid of the Franks, to expel the Longobards entirely from Italy. This crafty alliance of the Pope with Pepin, proved advantageous only to the designs of the prelate, and the chief means of establishing his secular power.⁶

This important point in history distinctly marks the date of the establishment of the papal power in Rome, which in the middle ages rose to such a pitch that all Europe trembled before it.

Thus, as we have seen, ecclesiastical history introduces first to our notice, single independent churches; then, to churches having several dependent branches; then, to diocesan churches; then, to metropolitan or provincial churches; and then, to national churches attuned to the civil power. In the end, we behold two great divisions of ecclesiastical empire, the Eastern and the Western, now

⁵ Versuch., &c., p. 367.

⁶ Comp. Ziegler as above. Bowers, *Gesch. der Papste*, 4v. Thl. p. 398, seq. Le Bret, *Gesch. von Ital.*, 1v, Thl., p. 36, seq. Especially Hallmann, *Ursprünge der Verfass.*, in *Mittelalter*. Ranke's *Hist. of Popes*, B. 1, c. 1, § 7.

darkly intriguing, now fearfully struggling with each other for the mastery, until at last the hypothesis of the *unity* of the church is consummated in the sovereignty of the pope of Rome, who alone sits enthroned in power, claiming to be the head of the church on earth. The government of the church began in a democracy, allowing to all of its constituents the most enlarged freedom of a voluntary religious association. It ended in an absolute and iron despotism. The gradations of ecclesiastical organization, through which it passed, were, from congregational to parochial—parochial to diocesan—diocesan to metropolitan—metropolitan to patriarchal—patriarchal to papal.

The corruptions and abominations of the church, through that long night of dreadful darkness which succeeded the triumphs of the Pope of Rome, were inexpressibly horrible. The record of them may more fitly lie shrouded in a dead language, than be disclosed to the light in the living speech of men. The successors of St. Peter, as they call themselves, were frequently nominated to the chair of "his holiness" by women of infamous and abandoned lives. Not a few of them were shamefully immoral; and some, monsters of wickedness. Several were heretics, and others were deposed as usurpers. And yet this church of Rome, "with such ministers, and so appointed,—a church corrupt in every part and every particular—individually and collectively,—in doctrine, in discipline, in practice,"—this church, prelacy recognizes in the period now under consideration as the only representative of the Lord Jesus Christ, invested with all his authority, and exercising divine powers on earth! She boasts her ordinances, her sacraments, transmitted for a thousand years, unimpaired, uncontaminated, through such hands! High Church Episcopacy proudly draws her own apostolical succession through this pit of pollution, and then the fol-

lowers of Christ, who care not to receive such grace from such hands, she calmly delivers over to God's uncovenanted mercies? Nay more, multitudes of this communion are now engaged in the strange work of "unprotestantizing the churches" which have washed themselves from these defilements. The strife is, with a proud array of talents, of learning, and of Episcopal power, to bury all spiritual religion again in the grave of forms, to shroud the light of truth in the darkness of popish tradition, and to sink the church of God once more into that abyss of deep and dreadful darkness from which she emerged at the dawn of the reformation. In the beautiful and expressive language of Milton, their strife is to "re-involve us in that pitchy cloud of infernal darkness where we shall never more see the sun of truth again, never hope for the cheerful dawn, never more hear the bird of morning sing."

REMARKS.

In connection with the view which we have taken of the rise and progress of the Episcopal system in the ancient church, we have a few things to remark upon its present characteristics and practical influence. Episcopacy, as it was in the beginning, appears to us to have been a lamentable departure from that form of government which the churches assumed originally, under the guidance of the apostles. Episcopacy, as it is now, though modified in various respects, appears to us still to retain many of its original characteristics, some of which we have briefly to suggest.

1. We object to Episcopacy, as a departure from the order of the apostolical and primitive churches.

To our mind, nothing is plainer than that the government of the church, in the beginning, was not Episcopal.

And, though we are not bound, by any divine authority, to an exact conformity to the primitive model, yet we cannot doubt, that the apostles were guided by wisdom from above, in giving to the churches a different organization, popular in principle, simple in form, and better suited to the exigencies of the church in every condition of society.

While, therefore, with so much gravity and self-complacency, Episcopacy talks of her "adherence to the Holy Scriptures, and to apostolical usage," we must be permitted to object to her whole ecclesiastical polity, as an innovation upon the scriptural system, and a total departure from the usage of the apostles, without any good reason, or favorable results.

2. We object to Episcopacy, that it had its origin, not in divine authority, but in human ambition.

This is the true source from whence it sprang in the ancient church. "First ambition crept in, which at length begat Antichrist, set him in the chair, and brought the yoke of bondage upon the neck of the church." This, to our mind, is a valid objection against Episcopacy. We cannot persuade ourselves, that a system, founded in human ambition, and reared and matured by human contrivance for sinister ends, should be suffered to set aside that order which God, in the beginning, gave to the Christian church through the medium of Christ and his apostles.

3. Episcopacy removes the laity from a just participation in the government and discipline of the church.

The spirit of this system is to concentrate all power in the bishops and clergy; and there are not wanting portentous indications, that this spirit is at work, and this process of centralization going on still in our country. In England it was long since completed. Episcopacy is a government administered *for* the people,—the great expedient of despotism in every form. The government of the primitive church was administered *by* the people,—the great safeguard of popular freedom, whether civil or religious.

Discipline is also administered *for* the church by the clergy. But our confidence is in the laity, as the safest and best guardians of the purity of the church. We claim for them a right to co-operate with the clergy in all measures of discipline relating to their own body; and believe it to be both their right and their duty to control the censures of the church. In transferring this duty from the laity to the clergy, Episcopacy does great injustice to the members of the church, and equal injury to the cause of pure and undefiled religion.

4. Episcopacy creates unjust distinctions among the clergy whose character and profession is the same.

The Scriptures authorize no distinction in the duties, privileges, or prerogatives of bishops, and priests, or presbyters. The distinction is arbitrary and unjust. It denies to a portion of the clergy the performance of certain duties for which they are duly qualified, and to which they are fully entitled in common with the bishops. It hinders the inferior clergy in the performance of their proper ministerial duties, and degrades them in the estimation of the people.

5. We cannot avoid the conviction that Episcopacy gives play to the bad passions of men.

We have seen what mischief it wrought in the ancient church, and we see not why the same causes, operating upon the heart of man, should not produce the same results. Is not the human heart open still to pride, to ambition, to lust for power, and love of supremacy? And is there nothing in all these Episcopal grades,—deacon, priest, bishop, archbishop, and what not, towering one above another,—is there nothing in all these to excite the bad passions of men? And where so much depends upon patronage and Episcopal favor, is there nothing to destroy a manly independence of the subordinate grades; creating in them a cringing sycophancy that moves in subservency to the prelate? Nothing to excite the discontent, the jealousy, or the envy of mortified ambition? Instead of all

this right hand and left hand, this going before, and in company, of which Gregory complains, give us rather the simplicity of the gospel order, which knows no such distinction among the ministers of Christ.

6. We object to the exclusive, intolerant spirit of Episcopacy.

This, to our mind, is one of its most obnoxious characteristics. That this single church should assume to be the only true church, and its clergy the only authorized ministers; that the only valid ordinances and sacraments are administered in their communion; that alone of all to whom salvation by grace is so freely published, they are received into covenant mercy,—all this appears to us as nothing else than a proud and sanctimonious self-righteousness, which we can only regard with unmingled abhorrence. There is an atrocity of character in this spirit, which can unchurch the saints of God of every age, in every Christian communion, save one, and consign them, if not to perdition, to God's uncovenanted mercies;—in all this there is an atrocity of character, which, in other days, has found, as it seems to us, its just expression in the fires of Smithfield, and in the slow torture of the *auto-da-fe*. Episcopacy holds no fellowship, no communion with us,—*dissenters*. “The Episcopal church, deriving its Episcopal power in regular succession from the holy apostles, through the venerable church of England,” makes public declaration, through its bishops, that it has “no ecclesiastical connection with the followers of Luther and Calvin.” Be it so. To all this we have no right to object. But we have a right to our own conclusions respecting the exclusiveness of such a religion.

We have already learned, from Planck, the able expounder of the constitutional history of the Christian church, the origin of these high-church dogmas in the ancient hierarchy. A profound expositor of the constitutional history of England has also sketched the origin of

these high pretensions in the English church. They are of comparatively recent origin, dating back only to the period of the settlement of the Puritans in this country. They sprang, also, from the same spirit for which high-church Episcopacy has ever been so much distinguished,—that is, unmitigated hatred of the religion of the Puritans. “Laud and his party, began, about the end of Elizabeth’s reign, by preaching the divine right, as it is called, or absolute indispensability of Episcopacy; a doctrine, of which the first traces, as I apprehend, are found about the end of Elizabeth’s reign. They insisted on the necessity of Episcopal succession, regularly derived from the apostles. They drew an inference from this tenet, that ordinations by presbyters were, in all cases, null.” Of Lutherans and Calvinists, they began now to speak, “as aliens, to whom they were not at all related, and schismatics, with whom they held no communion; nay, as wanting the very essence of Christian society. This again brought them nearer, by irresistible consequence, to the disciples of Rome, whom, with becoming charity, but against the received creed of the Puritans, and, perhaps, against their own articles, they all acknowledged to be a part of the catholic church.”⁷

7. Episcopacy is monarchical and anti-republican.

It is monarchical in form, monarchical in spirit, and, until transplanted to these states, has been, always and every where, the handmaid of monarchy. And here it is a mere exotic, our own republican soil being quite uncongenial to all its native instincts. Its monarchical tendencies and sympathies are clearly exhibited by Hallam, an historian of extensive, various, and profound erudition, whose work on the Constitutional History of England, Macaulay characterizes as “the most impartial book that he ever read.” “The doctrine of passive obedience, Episcopacy taught in the reign of Elizabeth, even in her homilies. To withstand the Catholics, the reliance of Parliament was

⁷ Hallam’s Constitutional History, Vol. I, pp. 540, 541.

upon the 'stern, intrepid, and uncompromising spirit of Puritanism.' Of the conforming churchmen, in general, they might well be doubtful."⁸

The doctrine of the king's absolute authority was inculcated by the Episcopal clergy. "Especially with the high-church party it had become current."⁹

Under Charles I, "they studiously inculcated, that resistance to the commands of rulers was, *in every conceivable instance*, a heinous sin. It was taught in their homilies."¹⁰ "It was laid down in the canons of convocation, 1606."¹¹

Sibthorp and Mainwaring, "eager for preferment, which they knew the readiest method to obtain, taught that the king might take the subject's money at pleasure, and that no one might refuse his demand, on penalty of damnation." And for such true and loyal sentiments, Mainwaring was honored with a bishopric by Charles, and Sibthorp with an inferior dignity.

James considered Episcopacy essential to the existence of monarchy, uniformly embodying this sentiment in his favorite aphorism, "No bishop, no king."¹²

Elizabeth and her successors, says Macaulay, "by considering conformity and loyalty as identical, at length made them so."

"Charles himself says in his letters, that he looks on Episcopacy as a stronger support of monarchical power than even an army. From causes which we have already considered, the Established Church had been, since the Reformation, the great bulwark of the prerogative."¹³ She was, according to Macaulay, for more than one hundred and fifty years, "the servile handmaid of monarchy, the steady enemy of public liberty. The divine right of kings, and the duty of passively obeying all their commands, were

⁸ Hallam's Const. Hist., Vol. I, pp. 262, 263.

⁹ Ibid., pp. 437, 438.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 264.

¹¹ Ibid., pp. 567—570.

¹² Neal's History of the Puritans, Vol. II, pp. 43, 44.

¹³ Macaulay's Miscellanies, Vol. I, p. 293. Boston ed.

her favorite tenets. She held them firmly, through times of oppression, persecution, and licentiousness; while law was trampled down; while judgment was perverted; while the people were eaten, as though they were bread."¹⁴

Great objection was made to the introduction of Episcopacy into this country, on account of its monarchical principles and tendencies, so entirely counter to the popular spirit of our government and our religion. It was received, at last, only on condition of making large concessions to the spirit of our free institutions. In the revolutionary struggle, great numbers of that denomination, and a larger proportion of their clergy, remained fast adherents to the British crown. Indeed, the monarchical spirit of Episcopacy, and its uncongeniality with our free institutions, is too obvious to need illustration.¹⁵

Our fathers came here to establish "a state without king or nobles, and a church without a bishop." They sought to establish themselves here, "a people governed by laws of their own making, and by rulers of their own choosing." And here, in peaceful seclusion from the oppression of every dynasty, whether spiritual or temporal, they became an independent and prosperous commonwealth. But what affinity, what sympathy has its government, civil or religious, with that of Episcopacy? the one, republican; the other, monarchical; in sympathy, in principle, in form, they are directly opposed to each other. We doubt not that the members of that communion are firm friends to our republican government; but we must regard their religion as a strange, unseemly anomaly here;—a religious government, arbitrary and despotic, in the midst of the highest political freedom; a spiritual despotism in the heart of a free republic!

¹⁴ Macaulay's *Miscellanies*, Vol. I, p. 249.

¹⁵ See an extract from Chandler's *Appeal* on behalf of the church of England in America. N. Y., 1767. Cited in Smyth's *Eccl. Republicanism*, which concedes fully the monarchical spirit of Episcopacy.

CHAPTER XI.

PRAYERS OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH.

THE religious worship of the primitive Christians was conducted in the same simplicity and freedom which characterized all their ecclesiastical polity. They came together for the worship of God, in the confidence of mutual love, and prayed, and sung, and spoke in the fulness of their hearts. A liturgy and a prescribed form of prayer were alike unknown, and inconsistent with the spirit of their worship.

In the following chapter, it will be my object to establish the following propositions.

I. That the use of forms of prayer is opposed to the spirit of the Christian dispensation.

II. That it is opposed to the example of Christ and of his apostles.

III. That it is unauthorized by the instructions of Christ and the apostles.

IV. That it is contrary to the simplicity and freedom of primitive worship.

V. That it was unknown in the primitive church.

I. The use of forms of prayer is opposed to the spirit of the Christian dispensation.

"The truth," says Christ, "shall make you free." One part of this freedom was exemption from the burdensome



rites and formalities of the Jewish religion. "The Lord's free man" was no longer bound to wear that yoke of bondage; but, according to the perfect law of liberty, James 1: 25. 2: 12, was required only to worship God in spirit and in truth. Paul often reprov'd Peter for his needless subjection to the bondage of the Jewish ritual, and his endeavors to impose this unauthorized burden upon his Christian converts. Gal. 2: 4, seq. 3: 1, seq. 4: 9, seq. Rom. 10: 4, seq. 14: 5, 6. Col. 2: 16—20. Such was the perfect law of liberty which the religion of Christ gave to his followers. It imposed upon them no burdensome rites; it required no prescribed forms, with the exception of the simple ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper. It required, simply, the homage of the heart; the worshipping of God in sincerity and in truth. So taught our Saviour and his apostles.

Indications of irregularity and disorder are, indeed, apparent in some of the churches whom Paul addresses; particularly among the Corinthians. 1 Cor. 14: 1, seq. These irregularities, however, he severely rebukes, assuring them that God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, v. 33; *i. e.*, of harmony in sentiment and action, as appears from the context. He ends his rebuke by exhorting them to let all things be done decently, and in order; declaring, at the same time, that the things which he writes on this subject *are the commandments of God*. v. 37. He commends the Colossians, on the other hand, for the good order and propriety which they observed; "joying and beholding their *order*, and the steadfastness of their faith." Col. 2: 5.

The freedom of the gospel was not licentiousness. It gave no countenance to disorder and confusion, in the earliest assemblies of Christians, convened for the worship of God. But it required them to worship him in spirit and in truth; in a confiding, filial, and affectionate spirit.

This is that spirit of adoption which was given them, and which, instead of the timid, cowering spirit of a slave, taught them to come with holy boldness to the throne of grace; and, in the amiable confidence of a child, to say, "Our Father who art in heaven."

We will not, indeed, assert that the spirit of this precept is incompatible with the use of a form of prayer; but we must feel that the warm and gushing emotions of a pious heart flow not forth in one unvaried channel. Who, in his favored moments of rapt communion, when, with unusual fervor of devotion, he draws near to God, and, leaning on the bosom of the Father, with all the simplicity of a little child, seeks to give utterance to the prayer of his heart,—who, under such circumstances, could breathe to heaven his warm desires through the cold formalities of a prayer-book? When praying in the Holy Ghost, the Spirit itself helping our infirmities, and making intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered, must we, can we employ any prescribed form of words to express these unutterable things?¹ Such a form, if not incompatible with such aids of the Spirit, and such promises of his word, must at least be opposed to them. So prayed not our Lord. Such were not the prayers of his disciples. This proposition introduces our second topic of remark.

II. The use of forms of prayer is opposed to the example of Christ and the apostles.

Several of our Lord's prayers are left on record, all of which plainly arose out of the occasion on which they were offered, and were strictly *extemporaneous*, the mere effusions of his heart. So far as his example may be said to bear on the subject, it is against the use of forms of prayer.

¹ Comp. Bishop Hall, in Porter's Homiletics, p. 294.

The prayers of the apostles were likewise occasional and *extemporaneous*. Such was the prayer of the disciples at the election of Matthias, Acts 1: 24; of the church at the release of Peter and John, 4: 24—31; of Peter at the raising to life of Tabitha, 9: 40; of the church for the release of Peter under the persecution of Herod; and of Paul at his final interview with the elders of Ephesus, 20: 36; he kneeled down upon the beach, and prayed as the struggling emotions of his heart gave him utterance.

It is particularly worthy of remark, that in all the examples of prayer in the New Testament, several of which are recorded apparently entire, there is no *similarity of form or expression, nor any repetition of a form*, with the single exception of the response, Amen, Peace be with you, &c. Even our Lord's prayer is never repeated on such occasions, nor is there, in all the New Testament, the slightest indications of its use either by the apostles, or by the churches, which were established by them.

The apostles, then, prayed extemporaneously; and their example is in favor of this mode of offering unto God the desires of our soul. Paul often requests the prayers of the churches to whom he writes, in regard to particulars so various, and so minute, as to forbid the supposition that they could have been expressed in a liturgy. The same may be said in regard to his exhortations to prayer, some of which, at least, are generally admitted to have relation particularly to *public prayer*, 1 Tim. 2: 1, seq. Who, on reading these various exhortations, would, without any previous opinions or partialities, ever have been directed to the use of any form of prayer by all that the apostle has written?

Our Lord's prayer, itself, is recorded with variations so great, as to forbid the supposition that it was designed to be used as a prescribed form; as the reader must

see by a comparison of the parallel passages in the margin.²

So great is the variation in these two forms, that many have supposed they ought to be regarded as two distinct prayers. Such was the opinion of Origen. He notices the different occasions on which the two prayers were offered, and concludes that the resemblance is only such as might be expected from the nature of the subject.³

III. The use of forms of prayer is unauthorized by the instructions of Christ and the apostles.

If any instructions to this effect were given by Christ, they were in connection with the prayer which he taught his disciples. We have, therefore, to examine somewhat in detail, the nature and design of the Lord's prayer. The views of the learned respecting the nature of our

² IN MATTHE. 6: 9—13.

Π' ΑΤΕΡ ἡμῶν ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς· ἀγιασθήτω τὸ ὄνομά σου.

Ἐλθέτω ἡ βασιλεία σου. γενηθήτω τὸ θέλημά σου, ὡς ἐν οὐρανῷ, καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς.

Τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον δός ἡμῖν σήμερον.

Καὶ ἄφεσις ἡμῖν τῶν ὀφειλήματων ἡμῶν, ὡς καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀφίεμεν τοῖς ὀφειλέταις ἡμῶν.

Καὶ μὴ εἰσενέγκῃς ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν, ἀλλὰ ῥῦσαι ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ.

IN LUKE 11: 2—4.

Π' ΑΤΕΡ, ἀγιασθήτω τὸ ὄνομα σου· ἐλθέτω ἡ βασιλεία σου.

Τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον δίδον ἡμῖν τὸ καθ' ἡμέραν.

Καὶ ἄφεσις ἡμῖν τὰς ἀμαρτίας ἡμῶν· καὶ γὰρ αὐτοὶ ἀφίεμεν παντὶ ὀφείλοντι ἡμῖν.

καὶ μὴ εἰσενέγκῃς ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν.

The doxology is generally supposed to be spurious; but without noticing the omission of this in Luke, the prayers are as various as they might be expected to be, if delivered extemporaneously on two different occasions, without any intention of offering either as a prescribed form of prayer.

³ Βελτίον ἢ διαφόρους νομίζεσθαι τὰς προσευχὰς κοινὰ τινε ἐχούσης μέρη. Περὶ εὐχῆς.—Vol. I, p. 227.

Lord's prayer, and the ends designed by it, are arranged by Augusti under three several classes.

1. Those who maintain that Christ offered no prescribed form of prayer, neither for his immediate disciples, nor for believers in any age; but that he gave this as an example of the filial and reverential spirit in which we should offer our prayers to God, and of the simplicity and brevity which ought to characterize our supplications, in opposition to the vain repetitions of the heathen, and the ostentatious formalities of the Pharisees. It is worthy of remark, that this was originally given immediately after rebuking such hypocritical devotions. Augustine, A. D. 400, expressly declares, that Christ did not teach his disciples what *words* they should use in prayer; but what *things they should pray for*, when engaged in *silent, mental prayer*.⁴

2. Those who contend that it is a specific and invariable form, to be used by Christians in all ages, like the baptismal formula in Math. 28: 19, 20; though not to the exclusion of other forms of prayer.

3. Others incline to the opinion, that the prayer is an epitome of the Jewish forms of prayer which were then in use; and that it comprised, in its several parts, the very words with which their prayers began, and which were embodied in one, as a substitute for so many long and unmeaning forms of prayer.

Whatever be the true view of this subject, it is remarkable that our Lord's prayer was not in use in the age of the apostles. Not the remotest allusion to it occurs in the history of the acts of the apostles, nor in their epistles. It is true, indeed, that the canon of the New Testament was not then established, nor their writings extensively known;

⁴ Non enim *verba*, sed *res ipsas* eos verbis docuit, quibus et se ipsi a quo, et quid esset orandum cum in penetralibus, ut dictum, mentis orarent. —*De Magistro*, c. 2, Vol. I, p. 402.

but we must suppose that tradition would, at least in some degree, have supplied the place of the gospels. The supposition, that, in all cases of prayer by the disciples and early Christians, the use of this form must be presumed, like that of the baptismal formula, is altogether gratuitous and groundless.

In the earliest apostolical fathers, also, no trace is found of this prayer. Neither Clement, nor Polycarp, nor any father, makes allusion to it, antecedent to Justin Martyr, A. D. 148. And he informs us that in Christian assemblies, the presiding minister offered up prayer and thanksgiving, *as he was able*, *ὡς ἔδραμις ἐντιῶ*, and that hereupon the people answered Amen! This expression, as we shall endeavor to show in another place, means,—*as well as he could, or to the best of his ability*. It shows that public prayers were not confined to any pre-composed forms. The Lord's prayer may have been used in connection with these extemporary addresses of the minister; but there is no evidence of such an usage. In describing the ceremony of baptism, Justin speaks of the use which is made of "the name of the universal father," *τὸ τοῦ Πατρὸς τῶν ὁλῶν*, which is supposed by some to be an allusion to the expression, "our Father who art in heaven."

Lucian, A. D. 180, in his *Philopatris*, speaks of *the prayer which begins with the Father*, *ἐυχὴ ἀπὸ Πατρὸς ἀρχαίμενος*, which may possibly be a similar allusion to our Lord's prayer.

Nothing much more explicit occurs in Irenaeus. He says, however, "*Christ has taught us to say in prayer, 'And forgive us our debts;' for he is our Father, whose debtors we are, having transgressed his precepts.*"⁵ This passage only shows his acquaintance with the prayer, but proves nothing in relation to the liturgical use of it. The same may be said of Clement of Alexandria, who

⁵ Adv. Haeres., Lib. 5, c. 17.

makes evident allusion to the Lord's prayer in several passages.⁶

The Apostolical Constitutions belong to a later age, and cannot, therefore, be introduced as evidence in the question under consideration.

Tertullian, at the close of the second century and beginning of the third, together with Origen, and Cyprian, who lived a few years later, give more authentic notice of the Lord's prayer.

Tertullian not only quotes the Lord's prayer in various parts of his writings, but he has left a treatise "On Prayer," which consist of an exposition of it, with some remarks appended, concerning the customs observed in prayer. In this treatise, which he is supposed to have written, before he went over to Montanism, i. e., before the year 200, Tertullian represents this prayer, not merely as an exemplar, or pattern of Christian petitions, but as the quintessence and ground of all prayer; and as a summary of the gospel.⁷ He strongly recommends, however, other prayers, and enumerates the several parts of prayer, such as supplication, entreaty, confession of sin, and then proceeds to show that we may offer other petitions, according to our accidental circumstances and desires, having premised this legitimate and ordinary prayer which is the foundation of all.⁸

Cyprian, who died A. D. 258, repeats the sentiments of Tertullian, whom he recognizes, to a great extent, as his guide in all points of doctrine. He wrote a treatise on the Lord's prayer, on nearly the same plan as that of Tertullian. He has less spirit, but is more full than his pre-

⁶ Especially Paedag., Lib. 3.

⁷ De Oratione, c. 1, pp. 129, 130.

⁸ Quoniam tamen Dominus prospector humanarum necessitatum eorum post traditam orandi disciplinam, "petite," inquit "et accipietis;" et sunt, quae petantur pro circumstantia cujusque, praemissa legitima et ordinaria oratione, quasi fundamento; accidentium jus est desideriorum jus est superstruendi extrinsecus petitiones.—De Orat., c. 9.

decessor; and often explains his obscurities. Cyprian says, that our Lord, among other important precepts and instructions, gave us a form of prayer, and taught us for what we should pray. He also styles the prayer, our public and common prayer;⁹ and urges the use of it by considerations drawn from the nature of prayer, without asserting its liturgical authority or established use.

Origen, contemporary with Cyprian, has a treatise on prayer, in the latter part of which, he comments at length upon the Lord's prayer. His remarks are extremely discursive, and chiefly of a moral and practical character; so that we derive no satisfactory information from him respecting the liturgical use of this prayer, or prayers rather, as he regards them. He, however, warns his readers against *vain repetitions and improper requests*, charging them not to *battologize* in their prayers;—an error which they could have been in no danger of committing, had they been guided by the dictation of a prayer-book. The explanation which he gives implies the use of extempore prayer.¹⁰

It appears from the foregoing authorities, that our Lord's prayer was neither in use by the apostles themselves, nor by the churches founded by them, nor by the primitive churches, until the close of the second century and beginning of the third. From this time it began to be used, and in the fifth and sixth centuries was a part of the public liturgies of the churches.

With reference to the Lord's prayer we subjoin the following remarks.

1. *It is questionable whether the words of this prayer were indited by our Lord himself.* If we adopt the theory

⁹ *Inter cetera sua salutaria monita et praecepta divina, . . . etiam orandi ipse formam dedit, . . . publica est nobis et communis oratio.—De Oratione, pp. 204—206.*

¹⁰ *De Oratione, c. 21, p. 230.*

of many that it is a compend of the customary prayers in the religious service of the Jews, how can it with propriety be affirmed that our Lord gave to his disciples any *form of prayer* whatever as his own?

2. *This appears not to have been given to the disciples as a form of public prayer*; but as a specimen of that spirituality and simplicity, which should appear in their devotions, in opposition to the "vain repetitions of the heathen," and the heartless formalities of the Pharisees. It merely enforces a holy importunity, sincerity and simplicity in *private prayer*. It was a prayer to be offered in secret, as the context in both instances indicates, Matt. 6: 3—14. Luke 11: 1—13.

3. Our Lord expressly enjoined upon his disciples to offer other petitions, of the highest importance, for which no form is given. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are offered to those who shall ask, while yet no prescribed formula is given, in which to make known our requests for this blessing. Why have we not, therefore, the same authority, even from Christ himself, for extemporaneous prayer, as for a litany? At least we must presume that our Lord had no intention to prescribe an exact model of prayer, while teaching us to pray, without any form, for the highest blessing which we can receive.

4. A strict adherence to this form is incompatible with a suitable recognition of Christ as our mediator and intercessor with the Father. "Hitherto," said our Lord in his last interview with his disciples before he suffered, "ye have asked nothing *in my name*." But a new and peculiar dispensation was opening to them, by which they might have "boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." The petitions of that prayer might, indeed, be suitable to the Christian in every age, and in all stages of his spiritual progress; but they are appropriate rather, to those under the law, than to those under grace. They

breathe not the peculiar spirit of him who would plead the name of Christ alone, in suing for pardon and acceptance with God.

5. This prayer belongs rather to the economy of the Old Testament. Christ was not yet glorified. The Spirit was not given; neither was the law of ordinances abolished. However useful or important it may have been, in the worship of God under the Old Testament, is it of necessity imposed upon us under that better covenant which God has given; and by which he gives us nearness of access to his throne, without any of the formalities of that ancient Jewish ritual; and only requires us to worship him in spirit and in truth?

6. The variations of phraseology in the forms given by the evangelists, are so great as to forbid the supposition that it is to be regarded as a specific and prescribed form of prayer. The reader has only to notice the two forms of Matthew and Luke, to see that the variations are too numerous and important to justify an adherence to one invariable form of speech. The only form of prayer that can be found in the Scriptures, is recorded on two occasions, with such variations as to exclude the possibility of deriving from either any authorized and unchangeable form of prayer. Both have the same general resemblance, united with circumstantial variations, which might be expected of one who was careful only to utter the *same sentiments*, without any studied phraseology or set form of words. They are as various as two extemporaneous prayers might be expected to be, if uttered upon two similar occasions with reference to the same subject.¹¹

IV. The use of forms of prayer is contrary to the simplicity and freedom of primitive worship.

¹¹ On this whole subject, comp. Augusti, Denkwürdigkeiten, Vol. V, pp. 88—134.

All the early records of antiquity relating to the ecclesiastical polity of the primitive Christians, and to their rites of religious worship, concur in the representation, that they were conducted with the utmost simplicity; and in total contrast, both with the formalities of the ancient Mosaic ritual, and the various forms of Episcopal worship and government, which were subsequently introduced.¹² The men of those days all accounted themselves the priests of God; and each, according to his ability, claimed the liberty, not only to teach and to exhort, but even to administer the ordinances. All this is explicitly asserted in the commentary upon Eph. 4: 11, which is ascribed to Hilary of Rome, about A. D. 360. "After churches were every where established, and ecclesiastical orders settled, the policy pursued was different from that which, at first, prevailed. *For, at first, all were accustomed to teach, and to baptize, each on every day alike, as he had occasion.* Philip sought no particular day or occasion in which to baptize the eunuch, neither did he interpose any season of fasting. Neither did Paul and Silas delay the baptism of the jailer and all his house. Peter had the assistance of no deacons, nor did he seek for any particular day, in which to baptize Cornelius and his household. He did not even administer the baptism himself, but entrusted this duty to *the brethren*, who had come with him from Joppa; as yet there were no *deacons*, save the seven who had been appointed. That the disciples might increase and multiply, all, in the beginning, were permitted to preach, to baptize, and to expound the Scriptures. But when Christianity became widely extended, small assemblies were formed, and rectors and presidents were appointed; and other offices, instituted in the church. No one of the clergy presumed, without ordination, to assume his office. The writings of the apostles do not, in all respects, accord

¹² Comp. Schoene, *Geschichtsforschungen*, Vol. I, pp. 91—132.

with the existing state of things in the church; *because these things were written at the time of the first organization of the church.*"¹³

This passage asserts the free and unrestrained liberty which all, at first, enjoyed, in instructing and exhorting; and in administering the ordinances and the government of the church.

There is a passage in Tertullian, also, indicative of the same absence of prescribed form and regularity. "After the reading of the Scriptures, psalms are sung, or addresses are made, or prayers are offered."¹⁴ All is unsettled. The exercises are freely varied, according to circumstances. This absence of all established forms, and the universal enjoyment of religious liberty and equality, was, indeed, sometimes misunderstood and abused, as we have seen, even by the churches to whom the apostle writes; and yet it was far from offering any encouragement to the disorders and extravagances of fanaticism. Observe, for example, the following upbraidings of such irregularities by Tertullian: "I must not fail to describe, in this place, the religious deportment of these heretics; how unseemly, how earthly, how carnal; without gravity, without respect, without discipline;—how inconsistent with their religious belief. Especially, it is wholly uncertain who may be a catechumen; who, a Christian professor. They all assemble and sit promiscuously as hearers; and pray indiscriminately. How impudent are the women of these heretics, who presume to teach, to dispute, to exorcise, to practise magic arts upon the sick; and, perhaps, even to baptize. Their elections to offices in the church are hasty, inconsiderate, and irregular. At one time they elect neophytes; at another, men of the world; and then apostates from us, that they

¹³ Comment. ad Eph. 4: 11. Ambros. Opera, Vol. III.

¹⁴ Jam vero prout Scripturae leguntur, aut psalmi canuntur, aut allocutiones proferuntur, aut petitiones delegantur.—*De Anima*, c. 9.

may, at least, gain such by honor, if not by the truth. No where is promotion easier than in the camps of rebels, where one's presence is a sure passport to preferment. Accordingly, one is bishop to-day; to-morrow, another; to-day, a deacon; to-morrow, a reader; and he, who is now a presbyter, to-morrow will be again a layman."¹⁵

In relation to this passage, which Neander quotes at length, he offers the following remarks, and we commend them to the attentive consideration of the reader. "We here see the operations of two conflicting parties, one of whom regards the original organization of the apostolical churches as a divine institution, and an abiding ordinance in the church, essential to the spread of a pure Christianity. The other, who contend for an unrestrained freedom in all external matters, oppose these views, as foreign to the freedom and simplicity which the spirit of the gospel encourages. They deny that the kingdom of God, itself inward, unseen, can need any outward organization for the support and spread of that kingdom. They contend that all Christians belong to the priesthood; and this they would practically exemplify, by allowing no established distinction between the clergy and the laity; but permitting all, in common, to teach, and to administer the sacraments; two parties, which we often see opposed to each other, in the subsequent history of the church. One of them lays great stress upon the outward organization of the visible church, by not suitably distinguishing between what may be a divine institution and what a human ordinance; the other, holds the doctrine of an invisible kingdom, but overlooking the necessities of weak minds, which are incapable of forming conceptions of objects so spiritual, rejects with abhorrence all such ordinances."¹⁶

¹⁵ *De Praescriptionibus Haeret.*, c. 41.

¹⁶ *Antagonisticus*, pp. 340, 341. 1825.

V. The use of forms of prayer was unknown in the primitive church.

The apostolical fathers, Clement and Polycarp, give us no information concerning their modes of worship in the age immediately succeeding that of the apostles. The circumstances of their meeting in secrecy, and under cover of the latest hours of the night, together with other inconveniences, must, it would seem, be very unfavorable to the use of a liturgy, or any form of prayer. Tertullian and Eusebius represent the primitive Christians, of whom Pliny speaks, to have come together, *ad canendum Christi, to sing praise to Christ*, and this is, perhaps, the most natural interpretation of the text.

We are left, then, to the conclusion, that the apostolical churches neither used any forms of prayer, nor is such use authorized by divine authority. In this conclusion, we are sustained by various considerations, drawn from the foregoing views of the simplicity of primitive worship.

1. The supposition of a form of prayer is opposed to that simplicity, freedom of speech, and absence of all formalities, which characterized the worship of these early Christians.

In nothing, perhaps, was the worship of the Christian religion more strikingly opposed to that of the Jewish, than in these particulars. The one was encumbered with a burdensome ritual, and celebrated, with many imposing formalities, by a priesthood divinely constituted, whose rank, and grades of office, and duties, were defined with great minuteness, and observed with cautious precision. The other prescribed no ritual, designated no unchanging order of the priesthood; but, simply directing that all things should be done decently and in order, permitted all to join in the worship of God, with unrestrained freedom, simplicity, and singleness of heart. The one, requires the worshipper to come with awful reverence; and, standing afar off, to

present his offering to the appointed priest, who, alone, is permitted to bring it near to God. The other, invites the humble worshipper to draw near, in the full assurance of faith; and, leaning on the bosom of the Father with the confiding spirit of a little child, to utter his whole heart in the ears of parental love and tenderness. Is it not contrary, then, to the economy of this gracious dispensation, to trammel up the spirit of this little child with a studied form of speech; to chill the fervor of his soul by the cold dictations of another; and require him to give utterance to the struggling emotions of his heart, in language, to him, uncongenial? Does it comport with the genius of primitive Christianity, to lay upon the suppliant, in audience with his Father in heaven, the restraints of courtly formalities and studied proprieties of premeditated prayer? The artlessness and simplicity of primitive worship offer a strong presumption in favor of free, extemporaneous prayer.

2. This presumption is strengthened by the example of Christ and his apostles, all of whose prayers, so far as they are recorded, or the circumstances related under which they were offered, are strictly extemporaneous.

This argument has been already duly considered, and may be dismissed without further expansion in this place.

3. We conclude that no forms of prayer were authorized or required in the apostolical churches, because no instructions to this effect are given either by Christ or the apostles.

The Lord's prayer, as we have already seen, was not a prescribed form of prayer, neither was it in use in the apostolical churches; nor are any intimations given in the New Testament of any form of prayer, prayer-book, or ritual of any kind, unless the response, to which allusion is made in 1 Cor. 14: 16, be considered as such. Here, then, is a clear omission, and manifestly designed to show that God did not purpose to give any instructions respecting the

manner in which we are to offer to him our prayers. This argument from the *omissions* of Scripture is presented with great force by Archbishop Whately, in support of the opinion which we here offer, and we shall accordingly adopt his language to express it.

After asserting that the sacred writers were supernaturally withheld from recording some things, he adds: "On no supposition, whatever, can we account for the omission, by all of them, of many points which they do omit, and of their scanty and slight mention of others, except by considering them as withheld by the express design and will (whether *communicated* to each of them or not) of their heavenly Master, restraining them from committing to writing many things which, naturally, some or other of them, at least, would not have failed so to record.

"We seek in vain there for many things which, humanly speaking, we should have most surely calculated on finding. 'No such thing is to be found in our Scriptures as a Catechism, or regular *elementary introduction* to the Christian religion; neither do they furnish us with any thing of the nature of a systematic creed, set of articles, confession of faith, or by whatever other name one may designate a regular, complete compendium of Christian doctrines: *nor, again, do they supply us with a liturgy for ordinary public worship, or with forms for administering the sacraments, or for conferring holy orders*; nor do they even give any precise *directions* as to these and other ecclesiastical matters;—any thing that at all corresponds to a rubric, or set of canons.'

"Now these omissions present a complete moral demonstration that the apostles and their followers must have been *supernaturally withheld* from recording great part of the institutions, instructions, and regulations, which must, in point of fact, have proceeded from them;—withheld, *on purpose* that other churches, in other ages and regions,

might not be led to consider themselves bound to adhere to several formularies, customs, and rules, that were of local and temporary appointment; but might be left to their own discretion, in matters in which it seemed best to divine wisdom that they should be so left."¹⁷

4. No form of prayer, liturgy, or ritual, was recorded or preserved by the contemporaries, inspired or uninspired, of the apostles, or by their immediate successors.

This consideration is nearly allied to the former, and is so forcibly urged by Archbishop Whately, that we shall again present the argument in his own words. "It was, indeed, not at all to be expected that the Gospels, the Acts, and those Epistles which have come down to us, should have been, considering the circumstances in which they were written, any thing different from what they are: but the question still recurs, why should not the apostles or their followers have also committed to paper, what, we are sure, must have been perpetually in their mouths, regular instructions to catechumens, articles of faith, prayers, and directions as to public worship, and administration of the sacraments? Why did none of them record any of the prayers, of which they must have heard so many from an apostle's mouth, both in the ordinary devotional assemblies, in the administration of the sacraments, and in the 'laying on of hands,' by which they themselves had been ordained?"¹⁸

The superstitious reverence of the early Christians for such productions as might have been obtained from the apostles and their contemporaries, is apparent from the numerous forgeries of epistles, liturgies, &c., which were published under their name. Had any *genuine* liturgies of the apostolical churches been written, it is inconceivable, that they should all have been lost, and these miserable forgeries, such as those of James, Peter, Andrew, and Mark,

¹⁷ Kingdom of Christ, pp. 82, 83.

¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 252, 253.

substituted in their place. Some discovery must have been made of these, among other religious books and sacred things of the Christians, which, in times of persecution, were diligently sought out and burned. Strict inquiry was made after these, and their sacred books, and sacramental utensils; their cups, lamps, torches, vestments, and other property of the church, were often delivered up, and burnt or destroyed. But there is no instance on record, of any form of prayer, liturgy, or book of divine service having been discovered, in the early persecutions of the church. This fact is so extraordinary, that Bingham, who earnestly contends for the use of liturgies from the beginning, is constrained to admit, that they could not have been committed to writing in the early periods of the church, but must have been preserved by oral tradition, and used "*by memory*, and made familiar by known and constant practice."¹⁹ The reader has his alternative, between this supposition, and that of no liturgy or prescribed form of prayer in those days of primitive simplicity. Constantine took special care to have fifty copies of the Bible prepared for the use of the churches, and, by a royal commission, entrusted Eusebius, the historian, with the duty of procuring them.²⁰ How is it, that the service-book was entirely forgotten in this provision for the worship of God? Plainly because they used none for this purpose.

5. The earliest fathers, in defending the usages of the church, and deciding controversies, make no appeal to liturgies, but only to *tradition*. "For these, and other rites of a like character," says Tertullian, in speaking of the ceremonies of baptism and of the Lord's supper, "for these, if you seek the authority of Scripture, you will find none. Tradition is your authority, confirmed by custom.

¹⁹ Antiq., Book 13, c. 5.

²⁰ Euseb., Vit. Constant., Lib. 4, 36.

and faithfully observed."²¹ But these should have a place in a liturgy. Cyprian advocates the mingling of water with wine, at the Lord's supper, by an appeal to tradition, without any reference to the liturgy of James.²²

Firmilian, his contemporary, admits, that the church at Rome did not strictly observe all things which may have been delivered at the beginning, "so that it was vain even to allege the authority of the apostles."²³

Basil is even more explicit. After mentioning several things which are practised in the church without scriptural authority, such as the sign of the cross, praying towards the east, and the form of invocation in the consecration of the elements, he proceeds to say, "We do not content ourselves with what the apostle or the gospel may have carefully recorded; with these we are not satisfied; but we have much to say before and after the ordinance, derived from instructions which have never been written, as having great efficacy in these mysteries." Among these unwritten and unauthorized rites, he enumerates afterwards the consecration of the baptismal water. "From what writings, ἀπὸ πούων ἐγγράφων," he asks, "comes this formulary? They have none; nothing but silent and secret tradition."²⁴

From the fact, that the appeal is only to tradition, we conclude, with Du Pin and others, that the apostles neither authorized, nor left behind them any prescribed form of worship or liturgy.

6. That simplicity in worship, which continued for some time subsequent to the age of the apostles, forbids the supposition of the use of liturgical forms.

²¹ Harum et aliarum hujusmodi disciplinarum silegem, ex postules scripturarum, nullam invenies. Traditio tibi prætenditur autrix, consuetudo confirmatrix, fides observatrix.—*De Corona Mil.*, c. 4.

²² Ep. ad Cæcil, p. 104.

²³ Ep. ad Cyprian, inter Ep. Cyp., 75, p. 144.

²⁴ De Spiritu Sancto, c. 27.

We return now to the second and third centuries, and, from the testimonies, particularly of Justin Martyr and Tertullian, we learn, that the worship of the Christian church, at this period, continued to be conducted in primitive simplicity, without agenda, liturgy, or forms of prayer.

Justin Martyr, in his Apology in behalf of the Christian religion, which he presented to the Roman emperor, Antoninus Pius, about A. D. 138, or 139,²⁵ gives a detailed account of the prevailing mode of celebrating the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper in the Christian church, in which he repeatedly mentions the *prayers* which are offered in these solemnities. "After baptizing the believer, and making him one with us, we conduct him to the brethren, as they are called, where they are assembled, fervently to offer their common supplications for themselves, for him who has been illuminated, and for all men every where; that we may live worthy of the truth which we have learned, and be found to have kept the commandments, so that we may be saved with an everlasting salvation. After prayer, we salute one another with a kiss. After this, bread, and a cup of wine and water are brought to the president, which he takes, and offers up praise and glory to the Father of all things, through the name of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; and gives thanks that we are accounted worthy of these things. When he has ended the prayers and the thanksgiving, all the people present respond, amen! which, in Hebrew, signifies, *so may it be.*"

The description above relates to the celebration of the Lord's supper when baptism was administered. In the following extract, Justin narrates the ordinary celebration of the supper on the Lord's-day. "On the day called Sunday, we all assemble together, both those who reside in the country, and they who dwell in the city, and the commentaries of the apostles and the writings of the

²⁵ Justin Martyr, by C. Semisch, Vol. I, p. 72. Trans. Ed. 1843.

prophets are read as long as time permits. When the reader has ended, the president, in an address, makes an application, and enforces an imitation of the excellent things which have been read. *Then we all stand up together, and offer up our prayers.* After our prayers, as I have said, bread and wine and water are brought, and the president, in like manner, offers prayers and thanksgivings, *according to his ability*, ὡς δύναμις αὐτοῦ, and the people respond, saying Amen!"²⁶

Justin lived for some time at Ephesus, and became a convert to Christianity in that city. So that the above is doubtless an account of the religious rites of that venerable church founded by the great apostle, and the scene of many of his most interesting labors. It is peculiarly gratifying to learn, from a witness so unexceptionable, that this church continues still to worship God in all the simplicity of the primitive disciples: They meet as brethren in Christ; they exchange still the apostolical salutation, the kiss of charity. The Scriptures are read, and the president or pastor makes a familiar address, enforcing the practical duties which have been presented in the reading. A prayer is offered in the consecration of the sacred elements, in which the suppliant prays *according to his ability*, following only the suggestions of his own heart, without any form. After this, they receive the bread and the wine in remembrance of Christ. All is done in the affectionate confidence, the simplicity, and singleness of heart of the primitive disciples.²⁷

The testimony of Justin, however, is claimed on both sides. The whole controversy hinges on that vexed passage, ὡς δύναμις αὐτοῦ. The congregation all stood up, and the president prayed, ὡς δύναμις αὐτοῦ, *according to his ability*. Some understand by this phrase, that he

²⁶ Apol., 1, 61, 65, 67, pp. 71, 82, 83. See above, 167.

²⁷ Comp. Schoene's Geschichtsforschungen der Kirch. Gebräuche, 1, pp. 102, 103.

*prayed with as loud a voice as he could; cujus mentio, est ejus refutatio.*²⁸ Others, with all the ardor and ferocncy of his soul.

Such are the interpretations of those who contend for the use of a liturgy in the primitive church. On the other hand, Justin is understood to say, that the president prayed *as well as he could*, to the best of his ability, or as Tertullian says, "*ex proprio ingenio.*" If this be the true meaning, it leads to the conclusion that the prayers offered on this occasion were strictly extempore. This is the interpretation, not only of non-conformists generally, but of some churchmen. It is the only fair interpretation of the prayer, according to the *usus loquendi* of this author.

The same expression occurs in other passages of our author, which may serve to illustrate the sense in which he uses this equivocal phrase. "We, who worship the Ruler of the Universe, are not atheists. We affirm, as we are taught, that he has no need of blood, libations, and incense. But, with prayer and thanksgivings, we praise him according to our ability, *ὡς δύνಾಮις*, for all which we enjoy, *ἐφ' οἷς προσφερόμεθα πᾶσιν*, having learned that, worthily to honor him is, not to consume in fire by sacrifice, what he has provided for our sustenance, but to bestow it upon ourselves and upon the needy; and to show ourselves thankful to him by our solemn thanksgivings for our birth, our health, and all that he has made; and for the vicissitudes of the season."²⁹

The Catholic and Episcopal rendering of this passage makes the author say, that, in *all our offerings*, *ἐφ' οἷς προσφερόμεθα πᾶσιν*, we praise him, *ὡς δύνಾಮις*, with the *utmost fervency of devotion*. This, however, is a mistaken rendering of the verb, *προσφέρειν*, which, in the

²⁸ The very mention of which is a sufficient refutation.

²⁹ Apol. 1, c. 13, p. 50, 51.

middle voice, means not to offer in sacrifice, or to worship, but to *participate*, to *enjoy*. So it is rendered by Scapula, Hedericus, Bretschneider, Passow, &c. The passage relates, not to an act of sacrifice, nor of *public worship*, as the connection shows, but to deeds of piety towards God, and of benevolence to men, done according to their ability, by which they offered the best refutation of the groundless calumnies of their enemies, who had charged them with an atheistical neglect of the gods. The declaration is, that for all their blessings they express, *according to their ability*, their thanksgivings to God, and testify their gratitude by deeds of charity to their fellow-men.

"Having, therefore, exhorted you, *ὡς ἡ δύναμις*, *according to our ability*, both by reason, and a visible sign or figure, we know that we shall henceforth be blameless if you do not believe, for *we have done what we could for your conversion*." ³⁰ He had done what he could; by various efforts of argument and exhortation, and by visible signs he had labored; according to his ability, to bring them to receive the truth. The exhortation was the free expressions of his heart's desire for their conversion. Can there be any doubt that the phrase denotes the same freedom of expression in prayer? These passages appear to us clearly to illustrate the *usus loquendi* of our author, and justify our interpretation of the phrase in question. ³¹

If one desires further satisfaction on this point, he has only to turn to the works of Origen, in which this and similar forms of expression are continually occurring, to denote the invention, ability, and powers of the mind. Origen, in his reply to the calumnies of Celsus, proposes to refute them, "according to his ability." ³² In his preface,

³⁰ Apol. 1, c. 55, p. 77.

³¹ Comp. King, in our Antiquities, pp. 213—215. Note.

³² *Ὡς ἡ δύναμις*, Lib. 6, § 1, Vol. I, p. 694, so also, *κατὰ τὸ δύναντον*, § 12, p. 638.

he has apologized for the Christians "as well as he could."³³ These Christians sought, "as much as possible," to preserve the purity of the church.³⁴ They strive to discover the hidden meaning of God's word, "according to the best of their abilities."³⁵ In these instances the reference is not to the fervor of the spirits, the ardor of the mind, but to the exercise of the mental powers. The act performed is done according to the invention, the ingenuity, the talents of the agents in each case.

Basil, in giving instructions how to pray, advises to make choice of scriptural forms of thanksgiving, and when you have praised him thus, *according to your ability, ως δύνασαι*, exactly equivalent to *ὅση δύναμις*,—then he advises the supplicant to proceed to petitions.³⁶ The Greeks and the Romans pray each in their own language, according to Origen, and each praises him *as he is able*.³⁷ But enough; the reader may safely be left to his own conclusions.

We come next to Tertullian. "We Christians pray with eyes uplifted, with hands outspread, with head uncovered; and, . . . *without a monitor, because from the heart*."³⁸ Can this be the manner of one praying from a prayer-book? Clarkson has shown, with his usual clearness, that the heathen worshipped by a ritual, . . . and rehearsed their

³³ *Κατὰ τὴν παροῦσαν δύναμιν*, Praefall, Lib. contr. Cel.

³⁴ *Ὅση δύναμις*, Contr. Cél., Lib. 3, Vol. I, p. 482.

³⁵ Lib. 6, § 2, p. 630. Comp. also in Comment. in Math., *ὅση δύναμις*, Tom. 17, Vol. III, p. 809, *κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν*, Tom. 16, Vol. III, p. 735, *κατὰ δύναμιν*, Tom. 17, Vol. III, p. 779, also Vol. IV, p. 6, *κατὰ τὴν παροῦσαν δύναμιν*, Tom. 17, Vol. III, p. 794.

Since writing the above, Clarkson's Discourse on Liturgies has fallen under notice, in which many other passages are given from Justin, Origen, Chrysostom, Basil, &c., all illustrating the same use of the phrase, pp. 68—73, 114—121.

³⁶ Basil, De Ascet., Vol. II, p. 536.

³⁷ *ὥς δύναται*, Origen, Contra Cels., Lib. 8, c. 37, p. 769.

³⁸ *Illuc sursum, auspicientes Christiani manibus expansis, quia innocuis, capite nudo, quia erubescimus; denique sine monitore, quia de pectore oramus.*—Apol., c. 30.

prayers from a book; and that Tertullian says this to contrast the Christian mode of worship with these heartless forms. These warm-hearted Christians needed no such promptings to give utterance to their devotions. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

Again, "When the sacramental supper is ended, and we have washed our hands, and the candles are lighted, every one is invited to sing unto God, as he is able; either in psalms collected from the Holy Scriptures, or composed by himself, *de proprio ingenio*. And as we began, so we conclude all with prayer."³⁹

From Tertullian we have the earliest information respecting the religious ordinances of the churches in Africa. The reader will not fail to notice, that this church also retains still the simplicity of the apostolical churches, mingled with some Roman customs. The brethren form a similar fraternity. Their religious worship opens with prayer, after which the Scriptures are read, and familiar remarks offered upon them. Then follows the sacramental supper, or more properly the love-feast of the primitive church, which they begin with prayer. After the supper, any one is invited to offer a sacred song, either from the Scriptures, or indited by himself. And the whole ends with prayer. The entire narrative indicates a free, informal mode of worship, as far removed from that which is directed by the agenda and rituals of liturgical worship as can well be conceived.

In the same connection, Tertullian also forcibly illustrates the sincerity and purity of this primitive worship. Speaking of the subjects of their prayers, he says, "These blessings I cannot persuade myself to ask of any but of him, from whom alone I know that I can obtain them. For he only can bestow them. And to me he has covenanted to grant them. For I am his servant and him

³⁹ Apol., c. 39.

only do I serve. For this service I stand exposed to death, while I offer to him the noblest and best sacrifice which he requires,—*prayer proceeding from a chaste body, an innocent soul, and a sanctified spirit.*"⁴⁰ Beautiful exemplification of the words of our Lord to the woman of Samaria, "Believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." John 4: 21, 24.

The authority of Tertullian is against the use of forms of prayer. "We pray," says he, "*without a monitor, because from the heart,*" *sine monitore quid depectore.* Much ingenuity has been employed to reconcile this expression with the use of a prayer-book, but viewed in connection with the freedom and simplicity in which their worship was conducted, its obvious import is sufficiently apparent. He justifies, indeed, the use of the Lord's prayer; but seems to intimate that to God alone belongs the right of prescribing forms of prayer. "God alone," says he, "can teach us how he would be addressed in prayer. But, he adds, "our Lord, who foresaw the necessities of men, after he had delivered this form of prayer, said 'Ask and ye shall receive;' and there are some things which need to be asked, according to every one's circumstances; the rightful and ordinary being first used as a foundation, we may lawfully add other occasional desires,"⁴¹ and make this the basis of other petitions."

From this passage it appears that their manner was, at the beginning of the third century, to repeat the Lord's prayer as the basis and pattern of all appropriate prayer to God, and then to enlarge in free, unpremeditated supplications, according to their circumstances and desires.

There is another circumstance mentioned above by Tertullian, which shows how far the worship of the primitive

⁴⁰ Apol., c. 30.

⁴¹ De Orat., c. 9.

Christians was at this time from being confined to the prescribed and unvarying formalities of a ritual. It appears that in their social worship each was invited forth to sing praises to God, either from the holy Scriptures, or "*de proprio ingenio*," of his own composing. Grant, if you please, that these sacred songs may have been previously composed by each. They are still his own, and have to the hearer all the novelty and variety of an occasional and extemporaneous effusion. So he who leads in prayer, like the one who sung his song, may offer a free prayer which he has previously meditated. But in the opinion of many, such songs may have been offered impromptu, like the songs of Moses and Miriam, and Deborah, Simeon and Anna. Augustine speaks of such songs, and ascribes to divine inspiration the ability to indite them. The improvisatori of the present age are an example of the extent to which such gifts may be cultivated without any supernatural aid.⁴² If, therefore, such freedom was allowed in their psalmody, much more might it be expected in their prayers.

7. The *attitude* of the primitive Christians in prayer is against the supposition that they used a prayer-book. What, according to Tertullian and others, was this attitude? It was with arms and eyes raised towards heaven, and hands outspread,⁴³ or it was kneeling and prostrate, with the eyes closed, to shut out from view every object that might divert the mind from its devotions; or, as Origen expresses it, "*closing the eyes of his senses, but erecting those of his mind*." Few facts in ancient history are better attested than this. The coins that were struck in honor of Constantine, represented him in the attitude of prayer.

⁴² Comp. Walch. De Hymn. Eccl. Apost., § 20. Munter, Metr. Offenbar. Pref.

⁴³ Illuc sursum suspicientes Christiani manibus expansis. Tertul., Apol. c. 30. Comp. De Orat., c. 11. Adv. Marcion, c. 23. Clemens. Alex. Strom., 7.

But how? not with prayer-book in hand, but *with hands extended and eyes upturned, as if looking towards heaven*, ὥς ἂν αὐτὸ βλέπειν δοκῇ ἀναστεινόμενος.⁴⁴

Now all this, if not absolutely incompatible with the use of a liturgy, must, to say the least, be very inconvenient. Can we suppose that this attitude would have been assumed at the beginning in the use of a cumbersome roll?

8. We have yet to add that the manner in which pre-conceived prayer began to be used is decisive against any divine authority for the use of them. It is an acknowledged historical fact, that in the earliest stages of the Episcopal system, there was not any settled and invariable form of prayer. All that was required was, that the prayers should not be unpremeditated, but previously composed and committed to writing. Still they were *occasional*, and may have had all the variety and adaptation of extempore prayers. This fact strikingly exhibits an intermediate state in the transition of the church from that freedom and absence of forms which characterized her earliest and simplest worship, to the imposing formalities of a later date. But it precludes the supposition that an authorized liturgy could have previously existed.⁴⁵

9. If it were necessary to multiply arguments on this point we might mention the secret discipline of the church as evidence against the use of a liturgy. This of itself is regarded by Schöne and others, as conclusive on this subject; a written and prescribed liturgy being quite incompatible with these mysteries. Basil refused to give explanations, in writing to Miletus, but referred him to Theophrast for verbal information, that so the mysteries might not be divulged by what he would have occasion to write. "Mysteries," said Origen also, with reference to the same point, "must not be committed to writing." The sacra-

⁴⁴ Euseb., Vit. Const., Lib. c. 15.

⁴⁵ Comp. Riddle's Christ. Antiq., p. 370.

mental prayers and baptismal rites, which should have a place in a liturgy, were among these profound mysteries. How they could be kept veiled in such mystery, if recorded in a prayer-book, is past our comprehension.

Basil, of the fourth century, informs us that he pronounced the doxology with varied phraseology—that the baptismal, was unrecorded, and that the church had not even a written creed or confession.⁴⁶ Clarkson has shown by a multitude of citations, that the same is true, of every part of religious worship which a liturgy prescribes. He has also given many instances of occasional prayers, which are inconsistent with the supposition that they rehearsed from a prayer-book.⁴⁷

Finally, the origin of these ancient liturgies, and the occasion on which they were prepared, is no recommendation of them.

They had their origin in an ignorant and degenerate age. The utmost that even the credulity of the Tractarians pretends to claim in favor of their antiquity, is, that “one may be traced with tolerable certainty to the fourth century, and three others to the middle of the fifth.”⁴⁸ Ambrose, Augustine, Gregory, Basil and Chrysostom, those great luminaries of the church, had passed away, and an age of ignorance and superstition had succeeded. Riddle, of Oxford, the faithful chronicler of the church, gives the following sketch of the degeneracy of this age,—the end of the fourth century.

“*Superstitious veneration of martyrs and their relics, credulous reliance upon their reputed powers of intercession, reports of miracles and visions at their tombs, and other follies of this kind, form a prominent feature in the religion of the age.*

⁴⁶ *Αὐτὴν δὲ ὁμολογίαν τῆς πίστεως εἰς πατέρα καὶ υἱὸν καὶ ἅγιον πνεῦμα ἐκ πόλων γραμμάτων ἔχομεν.*—*De Spiritu Sancto*, c. 27, p. 57, comp. p. 55.

⁴⁷ Discourse on Liturgies.

⁴⁸ Tract, No. 63, Vol. I, p. 439.

"*New Festivals during this century.*—Christmas-day, Ascension-day, Whitsunday (in the modern sense).

"*Baptismal Rites, Ceremonies, &c.*—1. Wax tapers in the hands of the candidates; 2. Use of salt, milk, wine, and honey; 3. Baptisteries; 4. Easter and Whitsuntide, times of baptism; 5. Twofold anointing, before and after baptism; 6. Dominica in Albis.

"*The Lord's Supper*, 1. was now commonly called *Missa* by the Latins; 2. Tables had come into use, and were now called *altars*; 3. *Liturgies used at the celebration of the rite*; 4. Elements still administered in both kinds as before; 5. No private masses.

"*Rapid progress of church oligarchy, and formation of the patriarchate.*"

Again, A. D. 439, "*Christian morality declines.*—Two distinct codes of morals gradually formed, one for perfect Christians, and another for the more common class of believers;—the former consisting of mysticism and ascetic or overstrained virtue,—the latter in the performance of outward ceremonies and ritual observances. The distinction itself unsound and mischievous; the morality, to a great extent, perverted or fictitious.

"History now records fewer examples of high Christian character than before. Complaints of the fathers, and decrees of councils, lead us to fear that *impiety and disorderly conduct* prevail within the borders of the church to a melancholy extent. *Superstition makes rapid progress.*"⁴⁹

Out of this age, when nothing was introduced anew, "but corruptions, and the issues thereof; no change made in the current usages, but for the worse; no motions from its primitive posture, but downwards into degeneracy;"—out of this age, proceeded the first liturgy, the offspring of ignorance and superstition!

⁴⁹ Riddle's Chronology, A. D. 400, A. D. 439.

The clergy had become notoriously ignorant and corrupt, unable suitably to guide the devotions of public worship; and, to assist them in their ignorance and incompetence, liturgies were provided for their use.⁵⁰ "When, in process of time, the distinguished fathers of the church had passed away, and others, of an inferior standing, arose in their place, with less learning and talents for public speaking,—as barbarism and ignorance continued to overspread the Roman empire, and after the secret mysteries of Christianity were done away, or, at least, had assumed another form of manifestation,—then, the clergy, not being competent themselves to conduct the exercises of religious worship to the edification of the people, saw the necessity of providing themselves with written formulas for their assistance. For this purpose, men were readily found to indite and transcribe them. In this manner, arose its formularies, which are known under the name of liturgies and missals, and which afterwards, in order to give greater authority to them, were ascribed to distinguished men, and even to the apostles themselves, as their authors."⁵¹

Palmer ascribes the four original liturgies, from which all others have originated, to the *fifth century*. He thinks, however, that some expressions in one may, perhaps, be traced to the fourth. Even the Oxford Tractarians claim for them no higher antiquity. "One, that of Basil, can be traced with tolerable certainty to the fourth century, and three others to the middle of the fifth."⁵²

⁵⁰ The reader will find abundant evidence of this ignorance, in the councils of this age, and in Blondell, *Apologia Hieron.*, pp. 500, 501, Clarkson, *Discourse on Liturgies*, pp. 191—197, and Witaius, *Exercit. De Oratione*, § 30, 31, p. 85. In the council of Ephesus, in the fifth century, Elias signs his name by the hand of another, *because he could not write his name; eo quod, nesciam literas*. So, also, Cajumas, *propterea quod literas ignorem*.

⁵¹ *Geschichtsforschungen, der Kirch. Gebräuche*, Vol. II, pp. 120, 121.

⁵² *Tracts for the Times*, No. 63, Vol. I, p. 439.

Now we seriously ask, Shall superstition, ignorance, and barbarism, rather than God's own word, teach us how we may most acceptably worship him? Shall we forsake the example of Christ and the apostles, to imitate ignorant men, who first made use of a liturgy, because they were unable, without it, decently to conduct the worship of God?

How forcibly does the formality of such liturgical services contrast with the simplicity and moral efficacy of primitive worship! Christianity ascends the throne, and, in connection with the secular power, gives laws to the state. The government has a monarch at its head; and the church, a bishop in close alliance with him. The simple rites of religion, impressive and touching by their simplicity, give place to an imposing and princely parade in religious worship. Splendid churches are erected. The clergy are decked out with gorgeous vestments, assisted by a numerous train of attendants, and proceed in the worship of God with all the formalities of a prescribed and complicated ritual. Age after age these liturgical forms continue to increase with the superstition and degeneracy of the church, until her service becomes encumbered with an inconceivable mass of missals, breviaries, rituals, pontificals, graduals, antiphonals, psalteries, and what not, alike unintelligible and unmeaning.

But the simplicity of primitive Christianity gives it power. It has no cumbersome rites to embarrass the truth of God. Nothing to dazzle the eye, to amuse and occupy the mind that is feeling after God, if haply it may find him. All its solemn, simple rites are in harmony with the simplicity of that system of gospel truth, which is at once the wisdom and the power of God, in the conversion of men. They present an easy and natural medium for the communication of religious truth to the soul, and lay the mind open to its quickening power, without the parade of outward forms to hinder its secret influences upon the mind.

REMARKS.

1. To the people of the congregation forms of prayer are inappropriate.

There is an intimacy in all our joys, our sorrows, and our trials; an intimacy and identity that makes them peculiarly our own; so that they find not a just expression in the language of another. The language may be more select, more appropriate, in the estimation of another who knows not my heart, but it is not my own, and but poorly expresses my emotions and desires. How variable withal, is this infinite play of the passions in the heart; and how preposterous the attempt to give utterance to them in one unvarying tone! As if the harp of David were always strung to the same key and sounded one unchanging note! First, stereotype the mind and heart of man, and then, is he prepared to express his devotions in the unvarying letter of a liturgy.

Among all the ills that man is heir to, new and unforeseen calamities are ever and anon breaking out, which may bring men to the throne of grace with supplications and entreaties of a special character. Shall we wait now until notice is given to the diocesan in the distant metropolis, and a prayer returned at last duly prepared for the occasion? But before it comes, that occasion has gone by, and given place to something else for which the bishop's form is altogether inappropriate.

2. Liturgical forms become wearisome by constant repetition.

The love of change is inherent in the breast of man. We must have variety. Without it, even our refined pleasures lose their charm in a dull and dead monotony. So a liturgy, however excellent in diction, or noble in sentiment, loses its interest by perpetual repetition. The continual

recurrence even of the best possible form, that of the Lord's prayer, has this effect upon our mind. We have heard it at the table in our daily meals; at morning and evening prayer, and in some instances, it has been the only prayer offered in our hearing; at funerals, at marriages, in baptism, in confirmation, at the sacrament of the Lord's supper; and in every public service, not once merely, but twice or thrice, and even more than this; as if no religious act could be rightly done, without bringing in somewhere the Lord's prayer. Such ceaseless repetitions only create a weariness of spirit, in which one earnestly craves a freer and more informal mode of worship. Let one example suffice for illustration. "How often have I been grieved to observe coldness and comparative indifference in the *reading-desk*, but warmth and animation in the pulpit! In how many different places have I been obliged to conclude, this man preaches in earnest, but prays with indifference! I have asked myself, I have asked others, what is the reason of such conduct." ⁵⁵ The case so embarrassing to our churchman is easily explained. In the *reading-desk*, the preacher utters the cold dictations of another; in the pulpit he expresses the warm suggestions of the heart. Here, accordingly, his utterance is instinct with life and spirit; there, it is changed by perpetual repetition into chilling indifference.

3. The significancy of a liturgy is lost by constant repetition.

To one who but seldom frequents an Episcopal house of worship, there may be much that is impressive in the liturgy. But the impression, we apprehend, must be greatly diminished by a constant attendance. The words of the prayer-book, now grown familiar, lose in a great degree their significancy. They fall upon the ear, like the murmur of the distant waterfall, lulling the mind to repose, or

⁵⁵ Churchman, in *Christian Observer*, 1804, p. 271.

leaving it to the undisturbed enjoyment of its idle musings. The listless inattention of men to the reading of the Scriptures, is a subject of public and painful notoriety; and the reason assigned is, that, by long familiarity and constant repetition, the words even of the great Jehovah fall upon the ear without making any adequate impression on the mind. The same result, in a much higher degree, may be expected from the constant recital of the liturgy. It may be a form of sound words; but it becomes in time no more than a form of words, received with passive reverence without the requisite impression.

4. A liturgy often is not in harmony with the subject of discourse.

The preceding remarks relate to the disadvantages of the liturgy to the people; the present, and some that follow, have reference to the inconvenience of the clergy from the same source. Every preacher knows the importance of harmony in his services. And if permitted, in the freedom of primitive worship, to direct them accordingly, he studiously seeks to make the impression from the prayers, the psalmody, and the reading of the Scriptures, coincident with the subject of his sermon; so that all may conspire to produce a single impression upon the hearer. The final result upon the audience is ascribable in a great degree to the studied harmony throughout the entire service. But here the liturgy interposes its unyielding forms, to break up the harmony of the service, and sadly to impair the effect of it upon the audience.

5. The liturgy is not a suitable preparation for the impression of the sermon.

Much of the practical *effect* of the preacher's discourse depends on having the mind duly prepared for it. This preparation results, in a great degree, from a happy adaptation of the preliminary services to this end. But the preliminaries of the liturgy move on with unvarying for-

mality, carrying the mind, it may be, directly away from the subject of the discourse that is to follow, or leaving the audience uninterested and unprepared, for any quickened impression from the preacher. He rises to address them, with the disheartening conviction that they are in no state rightly to receive what he has to say. He advances in his discourse, under the consciousness that he is toiling at a task that is too heavy for him; and retires at last, with the feeling that he has only labored in vain, and spent his strength for nought. So in the event; it appears, all has been done with cold and decent formality, but the profiting of the hearer does not appear. How much of the inefficacy of the pulpit in the Episcopal church is ascribable to this cause we leave the reader to judge.

6. A liturgy curtails unreasonably the time allotted to the sermon.

A sermon we know may be, and often is, too long; it may also be too short. Following the protracted recitals of the liturgy, it is necessarily crowded into a narrow space, at the conclusion of a service which has already unfitted the audience for a quiet, sustained attention to the preacher. What he has to say, must be quickly said; he, therefore, hurries through a brief and superficial exposition of his subject, and dismisses it with a hasty application, before it has had time to assume in the hearer's mind that importance which belongs to its momentous truths. And the final result is that it falls powerless upon the general conscience of the audience.

7. The liturgy exalts the inventions of man above the truth of God.

The liturgy is ever prominently before the audience; claiming the first attention, the highest place in all the acts of worship. In some liturgies the reading of the Scriptures forms no part of the public service, and in others, the word of God is mixed up with a mass of foreign

ingredients which do but neutralize its power. The tendency of the whole arrangement is to keep back the word of God, to hold in check its power, to rob religious truth of its chief glory as the means of salvation, and to substitute in its place a system of mere formalism.

In this connection, the profound remarks of Archbishop Whately, on undue reliance on human authority, are worthy of serious consideration. He exposes with great force the disposition of men, to "obtrude into the place of Scripture, creeds, catechisms and liturgies, and other such compositions, set forth by any church." This disposition he ascribes to deep seated principles of our nature. He supposes that nothing but a miraculous providence could have so directed the apostles and primitive Christians, that they left no such formulary of religious worship, or abstract of the Christian faith. "Such a systematic course of instruction, carrying with it divine authority, would have superseded the framing of any *others*—nay, would have made even the alteration of a single word, of what would on this supposition have been Scripture, appear an impious presumption. . . So that there would have been an almost inevitable danger, that such an authoritative list of credenda would have been regarded, by a large proportion of Christians, with a blind, unthinking reverence, which would have exerted no influence on the character. They would have had a form of godliness; but, denying the power thereof, the form itself would have remained with them only the corpse of departed religion."⁵⁴

Ought not then this momentous consideration to excite a wise jealousy of a tendency which may so easily be abused? In our mind it is an urgent reason for confining the ceremonials of religion within the strictest limits. But this continual recital of creeds and confessions, this perpetual profession of faith in the "holy catholic church,"

⁵⁴ Errors of Romanism, pp. 49—61.

these rites of the ritual ever recurring, and foremost in importance, to which every thing else gives place in public worship,—who can doubt the practical influence of all this? It casts into shade and distance God's own word. It brings forward the dictations of canonized tradition as the rule of faith and of worship; and spiritual truth is forgotten in this parading of the ceremonials of religion.

7. We object to the popish origin and tendencies of the English liturgy.

It is a translation and compend of the popish ritual, and savors too strongly still of its origin. We hear, indeed, so much of this "excellent," "this noble and pathetic liturgy," that it seems almost like sacrilege to touch that holy thing with other sentiments than those of profound veneration. But we dislike its origin, and the character which it inherits; must we, in this nineteenth century, go back to the dark ages of popery, and learn from her traditions, her superstitions, how we may best worship God in spirit and in truth? But this "pathetic litany," "this noble liturgy," it is said,—*"is it not admirable?"* To which we must still reply,

*Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes!*⁵⁵

Let us examine a little. What change has the liturgy undergone, in passing over from the Romish to the English church, and what is the difference between the two religions? The chief points of distinction, according to Hallam, are the following.

1. The liturgy was translated into the vernacular language of the people. Formerly, it had been in an unknown tongue.
2. Its acts of idolatrous worship to saints and images were expunged.

⁵⁵ I dread the Grekes; yea, when they offer gyftes.—*Howard's Trans.*

3. Auricular confession was done away; or rather it was left to every man's discretion, and went into neglect.

4. "The doctrine of transubstantiation, or the change, at the moment of consecration, of the substances of bread and wine into those of Christ's body and blood," was discarded.

5. The celibacy of the clergy was done away.⁵⁶

With these modifications the religion of Rome became that of the church of England. And to this day, her ritual, crudely formed in the infancy of Protestantism, which Milton denominates "an extract of the mass translated," continues with little variation to be the liturgy of the whole Episcopal church in England and America. Like the ancient liturgies, it was prepared for a priesthood who were too ignorant to conduct religious worship with decency without it. Even the book of homilies was drawn up at the same time, "to supply the defect of preaching, which few of the clergy at that time were capable of performing."⁵⁷

Multitudes in the kingdom were strongly attached still to the Roman Catholic religion. It was a politic measure to conciliate these as much as possible. For various reasons, the Reformers sought to make a *gradual*, rather than an abrupt departure from popery. The liturgy accordingly had then, and still retains many popish affinities. These are seen in the canonizing of saints, and celebration of saints'-days; in the absolutions of the priests, modified so as to unite the Protestant idea of forgiveness of sin by God alone, with the popish absolution by the priest; in the endless reiterations of the Lord's prayer; in the inordinate prominence that is given to liturgical forms; in the qualified and cautious phraseology of the communion service,

⁵⁶ Constitutional History, Vol. I, pp. 116—126.

⁵⁷ Neal's History of Puritans, I, p. 90. Hetherington's History of Westminster Divines, p. 21.

and the special care that *all the consecrated bread* and wine shall be eaten and drank, so that none of it shall be carried out of the church,—a point upon which the papists are ridiculously superstitious.⁵⁷ These popish tenets are seen particularly in the baptismal regeneration of the liturgy, by which the child becomes “regenerate, and grafted into the body of Christ’s church. . . . We yield thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it hath pleased thee to regenerate this infant with thy Holy Spirit, to receive him for thine own child by adoption.” The order of confirmation is so conducted as to confirm one in the delusion, that he has become “regenerate by water, and the Holy Ghost,” *through the instrumentality of this rite*, rather than by that grace which is the gift of God. The burial service, also, is exceedingly objectionable. “Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God, of his great mercy, to take *unto himself* the soul of our deceased brother here departed, we therefore commit his body to the ground; earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust, *in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life* through our Lord Jesus Christ.” This is said of every one alike, however profligate his life, however hopeless his death. In the American service, instead of this, at the grave it is said or sung, “I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, ‘Write, from henceforth blessed are the dead who die in the Lord; even so, saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labors.’” Rev. 14: 13. The practical influence of this service is apparent from the following remark of Archbishop Whately. “I have known a person, in speaking of a deceased neighbor, whose character had been irreligious and profligate, remark, how great a comfort it was to hear the words of the funeral service read over

⁵⁷ In the amendment of the liturgy, under Elizabeth, “the words used in distributing the elements, were so contrived as neither to offend the Popish, or Lutheran, or Zuinglian communicant.”—*Hallam’s Const. Hist.*, Vol. I, p. 150, note. Very catholic and accommodating, surely!



her, 'because, poor woman, she had been such a bad liver.' " ⁵⁸

Without controversy, a temporizing policy guided the early Reformers in the preparation of the English prayer-book. However many of the Episcopal church may repudiate the demi-popish delusion of Puseyism, which has come up over the length and breadth of our land, it is indirectly supported, if not plainly taught, in her ritual. The English reformers attempted a sinful compromise with the corruptions of the church of Rome. In the language of Macaulay, "The scheme was merely to rob the Babylonian enchantress of her ornaments; to transfer the full cup of her sorceries to other hands, spilling as little as possible by the way. The Catholic doctrines and rites were to be retained in the church of England." ⁵⁹

The great effort of a large party in this church at present is to reinstate these popish doctrines and rites in their communion,—an effort which Roman Catholics regard with the deepest interest. The celebrated Dr. Wiseman expresses, in the liveliest terms, his gratification at "the movement" of the Oxford Tractarians "towards Catholic ideas and Catholic feelings." He has "watched its progress with growing interest," because he "saw in it the *surest guarantee and principle of success*. The course which we (papists) ought to pursue seems simple and clear,—to *admire* and *bless*, and, at the same time, to *second* and *favor*, as far as human means can, the *course* which God's providence has opened, and is pursuing; but *to be careful how we thwart it*." ⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Errors of Romanism, p. 25.

⁵⁹ Review of Hallam's Constitutional History.

⁶⁰ Cited in Rev. H. H. Beamish's Letter to Dr. Pusey, p. 9.

CHAPTER XII.

PSALMODY OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH.

THE singing of spiritual songs constituted, from the beginning, an interesting and important part of religious worship in the primitive church. The course of our remarks on this subject will lead us to consider,

I. The argument for Christian psalmody as a part of religious worship.

II. The mode of singing, in the ancient church.

III. The changes in the psalmody of the church.

I. Argument for the psalmody of the primitive church.

1. From reason.

Praise is the appropriate language of devotion. A fervent spirit of devotion instinctively seeks to express itself in song. In the strains of poetry, joined with the melody of music, it finds an easy and natural utterance of its elevated emotions. Can it be doubted, then, that that Spirit which was shed forth upon the disciples after our Lord's ascension, would direct them to the continued use of the sacred psalmody of their own Scriptures, indited by the inspiration of the same Spirit? Is it unreasonable to suppose, that the glad spirit with which they continued praising God, might direct them to indite other spiritual songs to the praise of their Lord, whose wondrous life and



death so employed their contemplations, and whose love so inspired their hearts? The opinion has been expressed by Grotius, and is supported by many others, that we have, in Acts 4: 24—30, an epitome of such an early Christian hymn to Christ.¹

2. From analogy.

The singing of songs constituted a great part of the religious worship of all ancient nations. In all their religious festivals, and in their temples, those pagan nations sung to the praise of their idol gods.² The worship of the Jews, not only in the temple, but in their synagogues and in their private dwellings, was celebrated with sacred hymns to God. Many of the loftiest, sweetest strains of Hebrew poetry were sung by their sacred minstrels on such occasions. Christ, himself, in his final interview with his disciples, before his crucifixion, sung with them the customary paschal songs, at the institution of the sacrament;³ and, by his example, sanctified the use of sacred songs in the Christian church. All analogy drawn from other forms of religious worship, pagan and Jewish, requires us to ascribe to the primitive Christians the use of spiritual songs in their public devotions.

3. From Scripture.

The same is clearly indicated in the writings of the New Testament.

¹ Comp. Augusti, Denkwürdigkeiten, 5, 248.

² Semper id est cordi musis, semperque poetis
Ut divos celebrent, laudes celebrentque virorum

Ἵμνεῖν ἀθανάτους, ὁμνεῖν ἀγαθῶν καὶ ἀνδρῶν.

Theocritus, cited by Gerbert, Musica Sacra, T. 1,
Pref. Comp. 61, § 5, in which are many
references of a similar kind.

³ The collect for such occasions is comprised in Psalms 113—118, the first two before the paschal supper, and the remainder after it. The theory has been advanced, but without reason, that Christ himself indited the hymn on this occasion. Neither is it necessary to suppose that all the hymns abovementioned were sung by him and the disciples at this time.

Without doubt, in the opinion of Münster,⁴ the gift of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost was accompanied with poetic inspiration, to which the disciples gave utterance in the rhapsodies of spiritual songs. Acts 2: 4, 13, 47. The opinion of Grotius and others, with reference to Acts 4: 24—30, has already been mentioned. But there are other passages which clearly indicate the use of religious songs in the worship of God. Paul and Silas, lacerated by the cruel scourging which they had received, and in close confinement in the inner prison, prayed and sang praises to God at midnight. Acts 16: 25. The use of psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs, moreover, is directly enjoined upon the churches, by the apostle, as an essential part of religious devotions. Col. 3: 16. Eph. 5: 19. The latter epistle was a circular letter to the Gentile churches of Asia;⁵ and, therefore, in connection with that to the church at Colosse, is explicit authority for the use of Christian psalmody in the religious worship of the apostolical churches.⁶

The use of such psalmody, evidently, was not restricted merely to the *public* worship of God. In connection with the passage from Ephesians, the apostle warns those whom he addresses against the use of wine, and the excesses to which it leads, with evident reference to those abuses which dishonored their sacramental supper and love-feasts. In opposition to the vain songs which, in such excesses, they were disposed to sing, they are urged to the sober, religious use of psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.

The phraseology, therefore, indicates that they were not restricted to the use of the psalms of David merely, as in the Jewish worship; but were at liberty to employ others of

⁴ Com. Münster, Metrisch. Uebersetz. der Offenbar. Johann. Vorrede, p. 17.

⁵ Neander's Apost. Kirch., 1, 450, 3d ed.

⁶ All this is shown at length by J. G. Walch, De Hymnis Ecclesiae Apostolicae.

appropriate religious character in their devotions. It seems also that the Corinthians were accustomed to make use of songs composed for the occasion. 1 Cor. 14: 26. And though the apostle had reason to correct their disorderly proceedings, it does not appear that he forbade the use of such songs. On the contrary, there is the highest probability that the apostolical churches did not restrict themselves simply to the use of the Jewish Psalter. And the evidence is sufficiently clear, that the primitive churches very early employed, in their devotions, not merely the *psalms*, appropriately so called, but hymns and spiritual songs indited for the worship of the Christian church.

Grotius and others have supposed that some fragments of these early hymns are contained, not only as abovementioned, in Acts, but perhaps, also, in 1 Tim. 3: 16. Something like poetic antithesis they have imagined to be contained in 1 Tim. 1: 1. 2 Tim. 2: 11—13. The expression in Revelation, "I am Alpha and Omega; the first and the last," has been ascribed to the same origin, as has also Rev. 4: 8, together with the song of Moses and the Lamb, 15: 3, and the songs of the elders and the beasts, Rev. 5: 9—14. Certain parts of the book itself have been supposed to be strictly poetical, and may have been used as such in Christian worship, such as Rev. 1: 4—8. 11: 15—19. 15: 3, 4. 21: 1—8. 22: 10—18. But the argument is not conclusive; and all the learned criticism, the talent, and the taste that have been employed on this point, leave us little else than uncertain conjecture on which to build an hypothesis.

4. From history.

The earliest authentic record on this subject is the celebrated letter from Pliny to Trajan, just at the close of the apostolical age, A. D. 103, 104. In the investigations which he instituted against the Christians of his period, he discovered, among other things, that they were accustomed to meet before day, to offer praise to Christ as God, or as

a God, as some contend that it should be rendered.⁷ The expression is somewhat equivocal, and might be used with reference to the ascription of praise in prayer, or in song. But it appears that these Christians rehearsed their *carmen invicem, alternately*, as if in responsive songs, according to the ancient custom of singing in the Jewish worship. Tertullian, only a century later, evidently understood the passage to be descriptive of this mode of worshipping God and Christ, who says that Pliny intended to express nothing else than assemblies before the dawn of the morning, to sing praise to Christ and to God, *coetus antelucanos, ad canendum Christo et Deo*.⁸ Eusebius also gives the passage a similar interpretation, saying, that Pliny could find nothing against them, save that, arising at the dawn of the morning, they sang hymns to Christ as God, *Πλήν τό γε ἄμα τῇ ἡμέρᾳ διεγερτομένους τὸν Χριστὸν Θεοῦ δίκην ὑμνεῖν*.⁹ Viewed in this light, according to the most approved interpretation of the passage, it becomes evidence of the use of Christian psalmody among the Christians immediately subsequent to the age of the apostles.¹⁰ Tertullian himself also distinctly testifies to the use of songs to the praise of God by the primitive Christians. Every one, he says, was invited in their public worship to sing unto God, according to his ability, from the Scriptures, or *de proprio ingenio, one indited by himself*, according to the interpretation of Münster. But whatever be the meaning of this phrase, the passage clearly asserts the use of Christian psalmody in their religious worship. Again, he speaks of singing, in connection with the reading of the Scriptures, exhortations, and prayer in public worship.¹¹ Eusebius also speaks of singing in a similar manner.¹²

⁷ *Carmen Christo quasi Deo dicere secum invicem.*—*Epist.*, Lib. 10, 97.

⁸ *Apolog.*, c. 2.

⁹ *Ecccl. Hist.*, 3, 32.

¹⁰ Münster, *Metrisch. Offenbar.*, p. 25.

¹¹ *De Anima*, c. 9.

¹² *Vit. Const.*, Lib. 4, c. 45.

Justin Martyr also mentions the songs and hymns of the Ephesian Christians. "We manifest our gratitude to him by worshipping him in spiritual songs and hymns, praising him for our birth, for our health, for the vicissitudes of the seasons, and for the hopes of immortality."¹³

The testimony of Origen, † A. D. 254, again, of the church of Alexandria, is to the same effect. In answer to the charge of Celsus, that the Christians worshipped the great God, and sung hymns also to the sun and to Minerva, he says, we know the contrary, for these hymns are to him who alone is called God over all, and to his only begotten [Son], *ὕμνους γὰρ εἰς μόνον τὸν ἐπὶ πᾶσι λεγόμενον θεόν, καὶ τὸν μόνογενῆ αὐτοῦ.*¹⁴

Eusebius also has left on record the important testimony of Caius, as is generally supposed, an ancient historian, and contemporary of Tertullian. "Who knows not the writings of Irenaeus, Melito, and others, which exhibit Christ as God and man? And how many songs and odes of the brethren there are, written from the beginning, *jam pridem, a long time since*, by believers, which offer praise to Christ as the Word of God, ascribing divinity to him."¹⁵ This passage not only presents a new and independent testimony to the use of spiritual songs in the Christian church, from the remotest antiquity, *ἀπ' ἀρχῆς*, to the praise of Christ as divine, but it shows that these, in great numbers, had been committed to writing, as it appears, for continued use. So that we here have evidence of the existence of a Christian hymn-book from the beginning.

Christ, the only-begotten of the Father, is the burden of these primitive songs and hymns. Here is he set forth *doctrinally, θεολογικῶς, as the incarnate Word of God, as*

¹³ Apol., c. 13.

¹⁴ Against Celsus, Lib. 8, c. 67, p. 792, ed. Ruaei.

¹⁵ Πσαλμοὶ δὲ ὅσοι καὶ ᾠδαὶ ἀδελφῶν ἀπαρχῆς ὑπὸ πιστῶν γραφεῖσθαι, τὸν λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ τὸν Χριστόν ὕμνοισι θεολογοῦντες. —Ecl. Hist., 5, 28.

God and man. In his mediatorial character he employed the songs of these apostolical and primitive saints. This sacred theme inspired the earliest anthems of the Christian church; and, as it has ever been the subject of her sweetest melodies and loftiest strains, so, doubtless, will it continue to be, until the last of her ransomed sons shall end the songs of the redeemed on earth, and awake his harp to nobler, sweeter strains in heaven.¹⁶

One ancient hymn of the primitive church appears to have come down to us entire, from that distant period. It is found, indeed, in the *Paedagoge* of Clement of Alexandria, a work bearing date some hundred and fifty years from the time of the apostles; but it is ascribed to another, and assigned to an earlier origin. It is wanting in some of the manuscripts of Clement. It contains figurative language and forms of expression which were familiar to the church at an earlier date; and, for various reasons, is regarded by Münter and Bull,¹⁷ as a venerable relic of the early church, which has escaped the ravages of time, and remains a solitary remnant of Christian psalmody of that early age. However this may be, it is certainly very ancient, and the earliest that remains to us from the psalmody of the church. It is a hymn to Christ; and, though regarded merely as a poetical production it has little claim to consideration, it shows what was the strain of their devotions. We see in it the heart of primitive piety laboring to give utterance to its emotions of wonder,

¹⁶ Whatever may be the doctrinal truth in regard to the character of Christ, it is abundantly evident, that he was worshipped as divine in the prayers and psalmody of the primitive church. See our *Christian Antiquities*, pp. 203—206. This truth, again, is confirmed by the fact mentioned by Neander, that, "In the controversy with the Unitarians, at the close of the second and beginning of the third century, their opponents appealed to those hymns in which, aforetime, Christ had been worshipped as God." —*Allgem. Kirch. Hist.*, 1, 523, 2d ed.

¹⁷ *Metrisch. Offenbar.*, p. 32. Bull's *Defensio fidei Nicaenae*, § 111, c. 2, p. 316, cited by Münter.

love and gratitude, in view of the offices and character of the great Redeemer.¹⁸ It is not found in the later collects of the church, because, as is supposed, it was thought to resemble, in its measure and antiphonal structure, the songs which were used in pagan worship.

The songs of the primitive Christians were not restricted to their public devotions. In their social circles, and around their domestic altars, they worshipped God in the sacred song; and, in their daily occupations, were wont to relieve their toil and refresh their spirits, by renewing their favorite songs of Zion. Persecuted and afflicted as they often were,—in solitary cells of the prison, in the more dismal abodes of the mines to which they were doomed, or as wandering exiles in foreign countries,—still they forgot not to sing the Lord's song in the strange lands to which they were driven.¹⁹

II. Mode of singing in the ancient church.

Both the Jews in their temple service, and the Greeks in their idol worship, were accustomed to sing with the accompaniment of instrumental music. The converts to Christianity accordingly must have been familiar with this mode of singing. The word, *ψαλλόντες*, which the apostle uses in Eph. 5: 19, is supposed by critics to indicate that they sang with such accompaniments. The same is supposed by some to be intimated by the golden harps which John, in the Apocalypse, put into the hands of the four-and-twenty elders. But it is generally admitted, that the

¹⁸ The reader will find this hymn in our *Christian Antiquities*, pp. 226, 227. It is an anapaestic ode, with occasional interchanges of spondees and dactyls, which this measure admits. It is supposed also to consist of parts which may have been sung in responses. The divisions are as follows,—lines, 1—10, 11—28, 29—46, 46—63.

¹⁹ Comp. Jamieson, cited in *Christian Antiquities*, p. 375. It would not be difficult to adduce original authorities to this effect, but we must confine ourselves more particularly to the devotional psalmody of their public worship.

primitive Christians employed no instrumental music in their religious worship. Neither Ambrose, nor Basil, nor Chrysostom,²⁰ in the noble encomiums which they severally pronounce upon music, make any mention of instrumental music. Basil condemns it as ministering only to the depraved passions of men.²¹

It seems from the epistle of Pliny, that the Christians of whom he speaks, sang *alternately, in responses*. The ancient hymn from Clement abovementioned, seems to be constructed with reference to this method of singing. There is, also, an ancient, but groundless tradition extant in Socrates,²² that Ignatius was the first to introduce this style of music in the church at Antioch. It was familiar to the Jews, who often sang responsively in the worship of the temple. In some instances, the same style of singing may have been practised in the primitive church. But responsive singing is generally allowed not to have been in common use in the first three hundred years of the Christian era. This mode of singing was common in the theatres and temples of the Gentiles, and for this reason was generally discarded by the primitive Christians.²³ It was, at first, practised in the Syrian churches; it was introduced into the Eastern churches by Flavian and Diodorus, in the middle of the fourth century;²⁴ from them it was transferred by Ambrose, A. D. 370, to those of the West, and soon came into general use in these churches, under the name of the Ambrosian style of music.²⁵

²⁰ Ambrose, in Ps. 1, Praef., p. 740. Basil, in Ps. 1, Vol. II, p. 713. Chrysostom, in Ps. 41, Vol. V, p. 131.

²¹ Hom. 4, Vol. I, p. 33.

²² Eccl. Hist., Lib. 6, c. 8.

²³ Theodorus Mopsues., quoted by Nicetas Momin. Thesaur. orthodox, Lib. 5, c. 30, in Biblioth. Vet. Pat. XXV, p. 161.—*Augusti, Denkwürdigkeiten*, 5, 278.

²⁴ Theodoret, Eccl. Hist., Lib. 2, c. 19, p. 622.

²⁵ August., Confess., 9, c. 7. Paulini, Vet. Ambros., p. 4. Comp. Augusti, Denkwürdig., 5, p. 300.

Sacred music must, at this time, have consisted only of a few simple airs which could be easily learned, and which, by frequent repetition, became familiar to all. An ornamental and complicated style of music would have been alike incompatible with the circumstances of these Christian worshippers, and uncongenial with the simplicity of their primitive forms.²⁶

In their songs of Zion, both old and young, men and women, bore a part. Their psalmody was the joint act of the whole assembly in unison. Such is the testimony of Hilary, A. D. 355, the author of the first hymn-book, who represents the people as actually praying and singing together.²⁷ Ambrose remarks, that the injunction of the apostle, forbidding women to speak in public, relates not to singing, "for this is delightful in every age, and suited to every sex."²⁸ The authority of Chrysostom is also to the same effect. "It was the ancient custom, as it still is with us, for all to come together, and unitedly to join in singing. The young and the old, rich and poor, male and female, bond and free, all join in one song . . . All worldly distinctions here cease, and the whole congregation form one general chorus."²⁹

This interesting part of their religious worship was conducted in the same simplicity which characterized all their proceedings. All unitedly sung their familiar psalms and hymns, and each was invited, at pleasure, and according to his ability, to lead their devotions in a sacred song indited by himself. Such, evidently, was the custom in the Corinthian church. Such was still the custom in the age of Tertullian, to which reference has already been made.

²⁶ Augusti, *Denkwürdigkeiten*, 5, p. 288.

²⁷ Comment. in Ps. 65, p. 174.

²⁸ In Ps. 1, *praef.*, 741. Comp. *Hexaemeron*, Lib. 3, c. 5, p. 42.

²⁹ Hom. 11, Vol. XII, p. 349. Hom. 36 in 1 Cor., Vol. X, p. 340. Comp. Gerbert, *Musica Sacra*, Lib. 1, § 11, who has collected many other authorities to the same effect.

Augustine also refers to the same usage, and ascribes the talent which they manifested in this extemporaneous psalmody to divine inspiration.³⁰

Such, so far as we are informed, was the psalmody of the early church. It consisted in part of the psalms of David, and in part of hymns composed for the purpose, and expressive of love and praise to God and to Christ.³¹ Few in number, and sung in rude and simple airs, they yet had wonderful power over these primitive saints. The sacred song inspired their devotions both in the public and private worship of God. At their family board it quickened their gratitude to God, who gave them their daily bread. It enlivened their domestic and social intercourse; it relieved the weariness of their daily labor; it cheered them in solitude, comforted them in affliction, and supported them under persecution. "Go where you will," says Jerome, "the ploughman at his plough sings his joyful hallelujahs, the busy mower regales himself with his psalms, and the vine-dresser is singing one of the songs of David. Such are our songs—our love songs, as they are called—the solace of the shepherd in his solitude, and of the husbandman in his toil."³² Fearless of reproach, of persecution, and of death, they continued, in the face of their enemies, to sing their sacred songs in the streets and market-places, and at the martyr's stake. Eusebius declares himself an eye-witness to the fact, that under their persecutions in Thebais, "they continued to their latest breath to sing psalms, and hymns, and thanksgivings to the God of heaven."³³ And the same is related of many others of the early martyrs. We are informed by Chrysostom, that it was an ancient custom

³⁰ Cited by Münter, *Metrisch. Offenbar.* The sentiments of Grotius also are to the same effect.

³¹ Neander, *Allgem. Kirch. Hist.*, 1, p. 523, 2d ed.

³² Ep. 17, ad Marcellam. Cited in Arnold's *Abbildung*, p. 174.

³³ *Eccl. Hist.*, 8, c. 9.

to sing the 140th psalm every evening, and that these Christians continued through life the constant singing of this psalm.³⁴ The song of Zion was a sacred fountain, which, like the living waters of a desert, sustained in this barren wilderness, the growth and vigor of primitive piety, and overspread with perpetual verdure the vineyard of the Lord. On this point the sentiments of Herder are peculiarly interesting; and no one can speak with more authority respecting the psalmody of the ancient church. Speaking of the earliest hymns of the Latin church, after remarking that they exhibit little poetic talent or classic taste, he adds, "But who can deny their influence and power over the soul? These sacred hymns of many hundred years' standing, and yet at every repetition still new and unimpaired in interest—what a blessing have they been to poor human nature! They go with the solitary into his cell, and attend the afflicted in distress, in want, and to the grave. While singing these, one forgets his toil, and his fainting sorrowful spirit, soars in heavenly joys to another world. Back to earth he comes to labor, to toil, to suffer in silence and to conquer. How rich the boon, how great the power of these hymns."³⁵ He proceeds to say, that here is an efficacy and power which lighter songs, which philosophy itself, can never have; a power which is not ascribable to any thing new or striking in sentiment, or powerful in expression. And then raises the question, Whence then have they this mighty power? "What is it that so moves us?" To which he replies, "*simplicity and truth.* Embodying

³⁴ Chrysost. in Ps. 140, Tom. 5, p. 427.

³⁵ Augustine gives the following account of the power of this music over him on the occasion of his baptism. "Oh how freely was I made to weep by these hymns and spiritual songs; transported by the voices of the congregation sweetly singing. The melody of their voices filled my ear, and divine truth was poured into my heart. Then burned the sacred flame of devotion in my soul, and gushing tears flowed from my eyes as well they might."—*Confess.*, Lib. 9, c. 9, p. 118.

the great and simple truths of religion, they speak the sentiment of an universal creed—they are the expression of one heart and one faith. The greater part are suitable to be sung on all occasions, and daily to be repeated. Others are adapted to certain festivals; and, as these return in endless succession, so the sacred song perpetually repeats the Christian faith. Though rude, and void of refined taste, they all speak to the heart, and by ceaseless repetition sink deep the impress of truth. Like these, the sacred song should ever be the simple offering of nature, an incense of sweet odors, perpetually recurring, with a fragrance that suffers no abatement.”³⁶ Such is the simple power of truth wrought into the soul by the hallowed devotions of the sanctuary. Striking the deepest principles of our nature, stirring the strongest passions of the heart, and mingling with our most tender recollections and dearest hopes, is it strange that the simple truths and rude air of the sacred song should deeply move us? So presented, they only grow in interest by continued repetition. And in the lapse of years, these time-hallowed associations do but sink the deeper in the soul.

“Time but the impression stronger makes,
As streams their channels deeper wear.”

III. Changes in the psalmody of the church.

In the course of a few centuries from the fourth onward, several variations were introduced in the mode of performing this part of public worship, the effect of which was to withdraw the people from any direct participation in it, and to destroy in a great degree its moral power.

1. The first of these changes has been already mentioned, singing alternately by responses. This was

³⁶ Briefe zur Beförderung der humanitat., 7, Samml., p. 23, seq. Cited by Augusti, Denkwürdigkeiten, 5, p. 296, 297.

introduced into the Syriac churches, afterwards in the Eastern church, and finally, into the Western, by Ambrose. In this the congregation still bore some part, all uniting in the chorus, and singing the responses.

2. The appointment of singers as a distinct class of officers in the church, for the performance of this part of religious worship marks another alteration in the psalmody of the church. These were first appointed in the fourth century. But the people continued, for a century or more, to enjoy their ancient privilege of singing all together.

3. Various restrictions were from time to time laid upon the use of hymns of human composition, in distinction from the inspired psalms of David. Heretics of every name had their sacred hymns, suited to their own religious belief, which had great effect in propagating their errors. To resist their encroachments, the established church were driven to the necessity, either of cultivating and improving their own psalmody, or of opposing its authority to stay the progress of this evil. The former was the expedient of Ambrose, Hilary, Gregory Nazianzen, Chrysostom, and Augustine, &c.

But the other alternative in turn was also attempted; and the churches by ecclesiastical authority were restricted to the use of the psalter and other canonical songs of the Scriptures. All hymns of merely human composition were prohibited, as of a dangerous tendency and unsuitable to the purposes of public worship. The synod of Laodicea, A. D. 344—346, c. 59, passed a decree to that effect. The decree was not, however, fully enforced. But this, and similar efforts on the part of the clergy, had the effect to discontinue the use of such religious songs. The Arians of that age also opposed these ancient sacred hymns, for a different reason, and cultivated a higher style of sacred music.

4. The introduction of instrumental music. The tendency of this was to secularize the music of the church, and to encourage singing by a choir. Such musical accompaniments were gradually introduced; but they can hardly be assigned to a period earlier than the fifth and sixth centuries. Organs were unknown in church until the eighth or ninth century. Previous to this they had their place in the theatre, rather than in the church. They were never regarded with favor in the Eastern church, and were vehemently opposed in many places in the West. In Scotland no organ is allowed, to this day, except in a few Episcopal churches. "In the English convocation, held A. D. 1562, in queen Elizabeth's time, for settling of the liturgy, the retaining of organs was carried only *by a casting vote.*"

5. The introduction of profane, secular music into the church, was one of the principal means of corrupting the psalmody of the church. An artificial, theatrical style of music, having no affinity with the worship of God, began to take the place of those solemn airs which before had inspired the devotions of his people. The music of the theatre was transferred to the church, which accordingly became the scene of theatrical pomp and display, rather than the house of prayer and of praise, to inspire by its appropriate and solemn rites the spiritual worship of God. The consequences of indulging this depraved taste for secular music in the church are exhibited by Neander in the following extract. "We have it to regret, that both in the Eastern and the Western church, their sacred music had already assumed an artificial and theatrical character, and was so far removed from its original simplicity, that even in the fourth century, the abbot Pambo of Egypt complained that heathen melodies [accompanied as it seems, with the action of the hands and the feet] had

been introduced into their church psalmody.³⁷ Isidorus, of Pelusium, also complained of the theatrical singing, especially of the women, which, instead of inducing penitence for sin, tended much more to awaken sinful desires.³⁸ Jerome, also, in remarking upon Eph. 5: 19, says, "May all hear it whose business it is to sing in the church. Not with the voice, but with the *heart*, we sing praises to God. Not like the comedians should they raise their sweet and liquid notes to entertain the assembly with theatrical songs and melodies in the church; but the fear of God, piety, and the knowledge of the Scriptures, should inspire our songs. Then would not the voice of the singers, but the utterance of the divine word, expel the evil spirit from those who like Saul are possessed with it. But, instead of this, this same spirit is invited rather to the possession of those who have converted the house of God into a pagan theatre."³⁹

The assembly continued to bear some part in the psalmody of the church, even after this had become a cultivated theatrical art, for the practice of which, *the singers* were appointed, and trained as a distinct order in the church. The congregation may have continued for a time to join in a chorus or a response. But is it conceivable that a promiscuous assembly could unite in such theatrical music as is here the subject of complaint? Was not this style of music simply an art, requiring skill altogether beyond the rude simplicity which that sacred music must of necessity have in which all bear a part?

6. The practice of sacred music, as an ornamental, cultivated art, took it yet more from the people. It became an art which only a few could learn. The many,

³⁷ *Μελωδουσαν ᾠσματα καὶ ῥυθμιζουσιν ἡχους σεισουσὶ χειρ-
χειρας καὶ μεταβαίνουσι (βαλλουσι?) ποδας.*—Scriptores Eccle-
siastici, De Musica, T. 1, 1784, p. 3.

³⁸ Isidor. Pelus., C. 1, Ep. 90, Biblioth. Vet. Pat., Vol. VII, p. 543.

³⁹ Comment. in Ep. Eph., Lib. 3, c. 5, T. 4, p. 387, ed. Martianay.
Cited in Allgem. Kirch. Gesch., 2, p. 681, 2d. ed.

instead of uniting their heart and their voice in the song of Zion, could only sit coldly by as spectators. A promiscuous assembly, very obviously, could not be expected to bear a prominent part in such theatrical music as is here the subject of consideration. They might, indeed, unite in some simple chorus, and are generally understood not to have been entirely excluded from all participation in the psalmody of the church until the sixth or seventh century. Gregory the Great was instrumental in bringing singing schools into repute, and after him Charlemagne. Organs came about this time into use. But in the early periods of the Christian church, instrumental music was not in use in religious worship.

7. The clergy eventually claimed the right of performing the sacred music as a privilege exclusively their own. This expedient shut out the people from any participation in this delightful part of public worship.

Finally, the more effectually to exclude the people, the singing was in Latin. Where this was not the vernacular tongue, this rule of necessity was an effectual bar to the participation of the people in this part of public worship. Besides, the doctrine was industriously propagated that it was the appropriate language of devotion, which became not the profane lips of the laity, in these religious solemnities, but of the clergy rather, who had been consecrated to the service of the sanctuary. The Reformation again restored to the people this ancient and inestimable right. But in the Roman Catholic church, it is still divided between the chants of the priests and the theatrical performances of the choir, which effectually pervert the devotional ends of sacred music.

REMARKS.

1. To accomplish, in the happiest manner, the devotional ends of sacred music, the congregation should unitedly join in it.

In advancing an opinion so much opposed to the taste of the age, the writer has no expectation that it will be received with the consideration which, in his opinion, its importance demands. For he cannot resist the conviction, that in separating the congregation generally from a participation in this delightful part of public worship, we have taken the most effectual measure, as did the Catholic clergy in the period which has passed under review, to destroy the *devotional* influence of sacred music. What, may we ask, was the secret of that magic charm of sacred music, in the early Christian church? Whence its mighty influence over those primitive saints? It was, that the great truths of religion were embodied in their psalmody, and set to such simple airs that all could unitedly blend their voices and their hearts in the sacred song; and though they may have exhibited little of what is now denominated musical taste, or of the symphonies of a modern oratorio, they offered unto God the melody of the heart, by far the noblest praise. Their sacred songs became, as we have seen, the *ballads* of the people,⁴⁰ sung at all times, and upon every occasion. Religious truth became inwrought into the very soul of these Christians by their sacred songs. It entered, not only into their public devotions, but into their family worship, their domestic pleasures, and their social entertainments. Thus religious truth addressed itself to the heart of the people in a manner the most persuasive possible, and became associated, both with the most en-

⁴⁰ One has wisely said, "Let me make the ballads of the people, and I care not who makes their laws." But connected with religion their power is immensely increased.

dearing recollections of the heart, and its most hallowed associations. Will the music of our churches, however skilfully played upon the organ, or sweetly sung by a few select voices, ever so move the heart, and mould the character of the whole society? No; like the cold corruscations of the Northern lights, it does but amuse and delight the spectator for a while, and then passes away, leaving the bosom dark and cheerless as before. But when the music of the church is let down from the orchestra to the congregation below, and runs with its quickening influence, from man to man, until all feel their soul ascending in the song, which they unitedly raise to God, then it is the

“Heart grows warm with holy fire,
And kindles with a pure desire.”

No one can witness the worship of the churches in Germany, without being struck with the devotional influence of their psalmody. They are a nation of singers. Rarely is one seen in the church, whether old or young, who does not join in the song;⁴¹ and with an evident in-

⁴¹ The singing is the most devotional part of the religious worship of the Lutheran and Evangelical churches of Germany, and in proportion to other parts of worship is extended to an inordinate length. For example, on one occasion in the ordinary services of the Sabbath, the singing before sermon was observed, by the writer, to occupy *fifty minutes*. In the course of this time, two prayers were offered, neither of which occupied three minutes time, and two portions of Scripture were read, which did not occupy more than five minutes. All the prayers, including the litany, did not exceed ten minutes in length; while the singing employed near an hour. The prayers are liturgical forms to a great extent, briefly rehearsed at different times by the clergyman, in which the congregation seem not to be deeply interested. The singing is the act of the congregation unitedly, with which they are never weary, with which, I had almost said, they never appear to be satisfied. And yet these hymns have but very humble claims to consideration for the poetic taste which they display. In this respect they would by no means equal the antiquated collect of Tate and Brady. With the Divine Songs of Watts, and more lyric poetry they bear no comparison.

terest which it has not been the good fortune of the writer often to witness, or to experience in the churches of America. In our country this subject is encompassed with intrinsic difficulties which we pass without remark. But were it possible ever to make the modification under consideration in our church-music, even at the expense of the musical skill and the talent which are now displayed, we must believe that much would be gained to the devotional influence of our sacred music. What though, in humbler strains, and more simple airs, the churches raise to God their sacred songs of praise? What if some discordant notes occasionally disturb the harmony of their voices? if still they do but fulfil the apostolical injunction, singing and making melody in their *hearts* to the Lord, the noblest, the best, the only end, of sacred music is accomplished. Such are the strains which he who employs the songs of heaven delights most to hear.

“ Compared with these, Italian trills are tame ;
The tickled ears no heart-felt raptures raise.”

2. Christian psalmody was one of the principal means of promoting the devotions of the primitive church.

Enough remains on record in relation to this subject, to show what interest these venerable saints and martyrs had in their sacred songs. Enough, to show what power their psalmody had to confirm their faith, to inspire their devotions, to bring them nigh to God, and to arm them with more than mortal courage for the fiery conflict to which they were summoned in defence of their faith. Has this most interesting and important part of religious worship its just influence with us? Is its quickening power shed abroad over our assemblies, like the spirit of heavenly grace, warming the cold heart into spiritual life, and reviving its languid affections, as if with a fresh anointing from on high?

3. Christian psalmody affords the happiest means of enforcing the doctrinal truths of religion.

Reason with man, and you do but address his understanding; you gain, it may be, his cold convictions. Embody the truth in a creed, or confession of faith; to this he also yields assent, and remains as unmoved as before. But express it in the sacred song. Let it mingle with his devotions in the sanctuary, and in the family; let his most endeared associations cluster around it, as the central point, not only of his faith, but of his hopes, his joys; and what before was a speculative belief, has become his living sentiment,—the governing principle both of the understanding and the heart. The single book of psalms and hymns, therefore, does unspeakably more to form the doctrinal sentiments of men, than all the formularies, creeds, and confessions of polemics and divines. “The one,” says Augusti, “is chiefly for the minister; the other is in the hands of the people, and is, as you may say, his *daily creed*.”⁴² The heart, in religion, as in every thing else, governs the understanding. The sacred song that wins the one, fails not also to convince and to control the other. With great propriety, therefore, has the hymn-book long been styled, the *Layman’s Bible*.⁴³

Every religious denomination, accordingly, has its hymn-book. Every heretical sect, in ancient times, had also theirs. The spiritual songs of the primitive Christians were almost exclusively of a doctrinal character. “In fact, almost all the prayers, doxologies, and hymns of the

⁴² Denkwürdigkeiten, 5, p. 411.

⁴³ Augusti, Denkwürdigkeiten, 5, p. 411; also, 277. Augustin recognizes the same sentiment, as follows:—Cum reminiscor lachrymas meas quas fudi ad cantus ecclesiae tuae in primordiis recuperatae fidei meae, et nunc ipso quod moveor, non cantu, sed rebus quae cantantur, cum liquida voce et convenientissima modulatione cantantur, magnam instituti hujus utilitatem versus agnosco. Tamen cum mihi accidit ut me amplius *cantus* quam res quae canitur moveat, poenaliter me peccare confiteor, et tunc mallet non audire cantantem.—*Confess.*, Lib. 10, c. 33, Vol. I, p. 141.

ancient church are nothing else than prayers and supplications to the triune God, or to Jesus Christ. They were generally altogether doctrinal. The prayers and psalms, of merely a moral character, which the modern church has in great abundance, in the ancient, were altogether unknown."⁴⁴ And yet the modern Christians have not been inattentive to this mode of defending their faith. Their different collections of psalms and hymns abound with those that are expressive merely of points of doctrine, at the expense, often, of all poetical imagery or expression.⁴⁵

4. Christian psalmody is one of the most efficient means of promulgating a religious system among a people.

This was one of the earliest and most successful expedients for spreading the ancient heresies of the church. Bardasanes, the famous Syrian Gnostic, in the latter part of the second century, made this the principal means of propagating his sentiments. He composed songs expressive of the tenets which he would inculcate, and adapted them to music, to be sung by the people. His son, Harmonius, followed the example of his father; and such, according to Augusti, "was the influence of their efforts, that the Syrian church was well nigh overrun with their errors."⁴⁶ And not only the Gnostics, but the Manicheans, the Donatists, and almost every heretical sect, employed, with surprising success, the same means of promulgating

⁴⁴ Augusti, *Denkwürdigkeiten*, 5, p. 417.

⁴⁵ For example, the successive stanzas of the hymns in the Lutheran collection, begin, each, with one of the terms at the beginning of the creed. 1. I believe in God the Father, &c. 2. I believe in God the Son, &c. 3. I believe in God the Holy Ghost, &c.

⁴⁶ *Composuit carmina et ea modulationibus aptavit, finxit psalmos induxitque metra, et mensuris ponderibusque distribuit voces. Ita propinavit simplicibus venenum dulcedine temperatum; aegroti quippe cibum recusabant salubrem. Davidem imitatus est, ut ejus pulchritudine ornaretur ejusque similitudine commendaretur. Centum et quinquaginta composuit hic quoque psalmos. Ephraem, Syrus, in Hymn, 53, p. 553. Comp. Sozomon, h. e. 3, c. 16. Theodor., 4, c. 29; also, 1, c. 22.—*Denkwürdigkeiten*, 5, pp. 272, 273.*

their tenets. Taught by their example, the orthodox finally sought, in the same manner, to resist the progress of their errors. Such were the efforts of Ephraem the Syrian, Hilary, Augustine, and others.⁴⁷

Luther well understood this method of propagating truth and refuting error, and employed it with a skilful hand. For his great work he possessed remarkable qualifications, which are seldom united in one man. Among his varied accomplishments, not the least important were his poetical and musical talents. He was taught music with the first rudiments of his native language; and when, as a wandering minstrel, he earned his daily bread by practising his musical powers, in singing before the doors of the rich, in the streets of Magdeburg and Eisenach, he was as truly preparing for the future Reformer, as when, a retired monk in the cloister at Erfurt, he was storing his mind with the truths of revelation, with which to refute the errors, and expose the delusions of papacy. One of his earliest efforts at reform was to publish a psalm-book, A. D. 1524, composed and set to music chiefly by himself.⁴⁸

The psalms of the church, in the time of the Reformation, were wholly of a doctrinal character. "Hymns merely inculcating moral truths, which are so abundant in modern collections, were wholly unknown at this early period. As now, in symbols and catechisms, we have an abstract of the Christian faith, so then, was the substance of the fun-

⁴⁷ Augusti, *Denkwürdigkeiten*, 5, pp. 275, 276, 414, 415. For further information on this point, see J. Andr. Schmidt, *De modo propagandi religionem per carmina*. Helmst., 1720. 4to.

⁴⁸ This psalm-book is usually ascribed to Luther, though it bears not his name. It contained eight psalms, of which, however, but one bears his name. But he published in 1525, two editions, the first containing sixteen, and the other forty. In the collection of sacred music in use by the Lutheran churches in Germany, consisting of two hundred and fifty-three tunes, *twenty-five* are ascribed to Luther, either as the author of them, or as having been revised by him, and adapted to the use of the church. The authorship of a few is doubtful, though they are assigned to that age.

damental doctrines of the Christian faith embodied in their divine songs.”⁴⁹ Weapons so simple were employed with surprising effect by the great Reformer. Even his enemies acknowledged their hated power. *Cantilenæ vernaculo idiomate, quarum plurimæ ex ipsius Lutheri officina sunt profectæ, mirum est, quam promoveant rem Lutheranam. Quædam dogmaticæ, aliæ æmulantur psalmos pios;—recitant exagitantque Christianorum vitia sive vera, sive ficta.*⁵⁰ Such is the mighty power of sacred psalmody in propagating the Christian faith.

“These weapons of our holy war,
Of what almighty force they are!”

Have our missionaries waged with due diligence and skill, this mode of warfare, and applied these weapons from the armory of heaven, to assail the strongholds of Satan?

5. Is not the influence of sacred music too much overlooked as a means of *moral discipline*, in our efforts to educate the young, and to reform the vicious?

Has it the place which its great importance demands in our primary schools and higher seminaries of learning? In our admirable system of prison discipline, has it its proper place among the reforming influences which are employed to quicken the conscience of the hardened transgressor, and

⁴⁹ Augusti, Denkwürdigkeiten, 5, p. 287.

⁵⁰ These hymns, many of which are manufactured in Luther's own laboratory, and sung in the vernacular tongue of the people,—it is wonderful what power they have in propagating the doctrines of Luther! Some of them doctrinal in their character, others imitating devotional psalms, they repeat and promulgate the vile sentiments of the Christians, whether true or false.—*Thomas de Jesu*, (Didacus Davila) *Thesaur. sapient, divinæ*, T. 2, p. 541. Luther inserted in the title-page of his hymn-book, published at Wittenberg, in 1543, the following stanza:

“Viel falscher Meister jitzt Lieder dichten,
Siche dich für, und lern' sie recht richten.
Wo Gott hin bauet sein' Kirch' und sein Wort,
Da will der Teufel seyn mit Trug und Mord.”

Augusti, Denkwürdigkeiten, 5, p. 287.

turn him from the error of his ways?⁵¹ Has the power of sacred music been sufficiently employed to restore the insane? We know the magic power of David's harp to tame the ferocious and frenzied spirit of Saul; and will not the same means have a similar effect, to soothe and to tranquillize the poor maniac's bewildered soul, and to restore him to his right mind? We submit these inquiries respectfully to the careful consideration of the reader, and leave the subject for the discussion of an abler pen.

Finally. This subject suggests the importance of simplicity in church psalmody.

Let our sacred songs be simple in their poetry. Such is the poetry of nature, of devotion, of the Scriptures. If you would have the songs of Zion come from the heart, the offspring of pure and deep emotion, if you would have them stir the souls of the whole assembly for lively, sympathetic worship, they must be indited in the simplicity of pure devotion. And let the notes of sacred music have the same delightful simplicity. Let them be adapted to Congregational singing. Let all be trained to sing as early and as universally as they are taught to read; and if you would have the soul ascending in the song, let the whole assembly join in the solemn hymn which they raise to God. The primitive church knew nothing of a choir, set apart and withdrawn from the congregation, for the exclusive performance of this delightful part of public worship. "The Bible knows nothing of a worship conducted by a few, in behalf of a silent multitude; but calls upon every thing that hath breath to join in this divine employ." Have we done well, then, in substituting for the voice of all the people in

⁵¹ "I always keep these little rogues singing at their work," said a distinguished overseer of an institution for juvenile offenders, in Berlin, "I always keep them singing, for while the children sing, the devil cannot come among them at all; he can only sit out doors there and growl; but if they stop singing, in comes the devil."—*Prof. Stowe, on Com. Schools*, p. 26.

the praise of God, the voice of a few in a choir? For the sweet simplicity of ancient melodies, hallowed by a thousand sacred associations, have we wisely introduced the musical display of modern airs? Have we done well in substituting, even for the rude simplicity of our fathers, if such you please to call it, the profane and secular airs of our modern harmonies? After admiring those charming portraits of the great and revered reformer which adorn the galleries of his native country, clad in the easy, simple and appropriate costume of the age, who would endure the sight of that venerable form dressed out in the modern style, so trim and sleek, of a fashionable fop? With the same wretched taste do you mar, in attempting to mend the music of the great masters of another age, by conforming it to the style of the present.

It is exceedingly gratifying to observe in the public journals and current literature of the day, the return of the public mind to a better taste in sacred music; and to notice that several of the ablest masters in the country have entered in earnest upon the work of reform. Heaven speed their work, and hasten on the day, when, with sweet accord of hearts and voices attuned to the worship of God, all shall join in singing to his praise in the great congregation.

CHAPTER XIII.

HOMILIES IN THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH.

UNDER this head we shall direct our attention

- I. To the discourses of Christ and of the apostles.
- II. To the homilies of the fathers in the Greek church.
- III. To those of the fathers in the Latin church.

I. The discourses of Christ and of the apostles.

The reading of the Scriptures, in connection with remarks and exhortations, constituted a part of the social worship of the primitive church. The apostles, wherever they went, frequented the synagogues of the Jews, where, after the reading of the Scriptures, an invitation was given to any one to remark upon what had been read. In this way they took occasion to speak of Christ and his doctrines to their brethren. Their addresses were occasional and apposite; varied, with consummate skill, according to the circumstances of the hearer, and addressed, with great directness and pungency, to the understanding and the heart.

In the Acts, we have brief notices of several of the addresses of Peter, and of Paul, and of one from Stephen, from which we may gather a distinct impression of their style of address. The first from Peter was before the disciples, who, to the number of one hundred and twenty, were

assembled to elect a substitute in the place of the traitor, Judas. Acts 1: 15. It is calculated to soothe the minds of his hearers, oppressed by the melancholy end of this apostate, by showing that all had transpired according to the prediction of God's word, and served to fulfil the counsel of his will.

The second was delivered on the occasion of the shedding forth of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. Acts 2: 14. After refuting the malicious charge of having drunk to excess, he proceeds to show, from the Scriptures, that all which the multitude saw was only the fulfilment of ancient prophecy; he charges them with having crucified the Lord Jesus Christ, whom God had exalted as a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel, and remission of sins. Such was the force of his cutting reproof, that three thousand were brought to believe in Christ crucified.

His third address, on the occasion of healing the lame man in the temple, Acts iii, was of the same character, and attended with a similar result. His fourth and fifth were delivered before the Sanhedrim, in defence of himself and the apostles. Acts 4: 7. 5: 29. Of these we only know that the subject was the same as in the preceding,—Christ wickedly crucified and slain by the Jews, and raised from the dead for the salvation of men. Before Cornelius the centurion, Acts 6: 34, after explaining the miraculous manner in which his Jewish prejudices had been overruled, and how he had been led to see the comprehensive nature of the gospel system, he gives an outline of its great truths, attested by the Scriptures, relating to Christ, to the resurrection, and the final judgment. All these discourses manifest the same boldness and fervency of spirit, and are directed to produce the same result—repentance for sin, and faith in Christ.

Stephen, in his defence before the Sanhedrim, Acts vii, traces the whole history of God's dispensations to the Jews,

and of their treatment of his servants the prophets, whom they had rejected and slain, and finally consummated their guilt by becoming the betrayers and murderers of the holy and just One. Paul, in his address at Antioch, pursues the same style; showing how, from age to age, God had been unfolding his purpose to give salvation to men by Jesus Christ, and bringing the whole to bear with tremendous force in its application to his hearers. "Beware, therefore, lest that come upon you which is spoken in the prophets; 'Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish; for I work a work in your day, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.'" Acts 13: 40, 41. Time would fail us to follow the apostle in his masterly address before the Areopagus at Athens, Acts 17: 22,—to attend to his affecting interview with the elders of Ephesus at Miletus, Acts 20: 18, and to his admirable defence before the Jews, and before Festus, and Agrippa the king, Acts xxii, xxiii, xxvi. With the Greeks he reasoned as a Greek, making no reference to the Jewish Scriptures; but, from their own poets, and the natural principles of philosophy and of religion, convincing them of their vain superstitions. With the Jews he reasoned as a Jew, out of their own sacred books, and testified to all, both Jew and Greek, the great doctrines of repentance, and faith in Christ, the resurrection of the dead, and the general judgment.

The addresses of the apostles are remarkable at once for their simplicity and their power. None ever preached with such effect as they. Wherever they went converts were multiplied and churches reared up, in defiance of all opposition, and in the face of every conceivable discouragement. Strong in faith and mighty in the Scriptures, these few men, in a few short years, were instrumental in making greater conquests over the kingdom of Satan, and winning more souls to Christ, than all the missionaries of all Christendom have gained in half a century. Whence, then, this

mighty power? Without venturing into this interesting field of inquiry, we may offer a few suggestions in relation to the characteristics of the apostles' preaching.

1. They insisted chiefly on a few cardinal points, comprising the great truths of the Christian religion.

Christ, and him crucified; repentance; faith in him, and the remission of sins; the resurrection; and the general judgment;—these are the great points to which all their addresses are directed. The simplicity of these truths gave a like simplicity to their preaching. Beaming full on their own minds, and occupying their whole soul, these momentous truths fell from their lips with tremendous power upon the hearts and consciences of their hearers. No power of oratory or strength of argument could equal the awful conception which they had of what they preached. They could, therefore, only speak in the fullness of their hearts, and with earnestness and simplicity, what they had heard, and seen, and felt. The word thus spoken was quick and powerful; it cut to the heart; it converted the soul.

2. Their full conviction of the truths which they preached, gave directness and pungency to their addresses.

They preached no cunningly-devised fables. No refined speculations or doubtful disputations employed their speech. But, honest in their sacred cause, and much impressed with what they said, and anxious only to fasten the same impressions on the minds of their hearers, they spoke with honest earnestness, the convictions of their inmost soul. These strong convictions gave them the noblest eloquence, the eloquence of truth and of nature. *Pietas est quod disertum facit*, says the great Roman orator. Piety inspires true eloquence. This was the secret of their eloquence. They felt the high importance of what they said; and, springing from the heart, their exhortations touched the hearts of those to whom they spoke.

3. Their preaching was wholly *scriptural*; based on the Scriptures, and restricted to the single purpose of making manifest the truths of God's word.

They preached not themselves, but Jesus Christ, in the very character in which he is revealed in the word of God, and to which all the prophets have given testimony. Standing thus in the counsel of the Lord, they had strong ground of defence, and holy boldness in declaring what God had said. Their preaching was, accordingly, in the demonstration of the Spirit and of power. Armed with this energy divine, is it wonderful that the word spoken had this quickening power?

4. The contradiction and persecution which they continually experienced, gave peculiar earnestness and power to their ministrations.

One who, like Paul, could say, "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God," Acts 20: 24;—such a man only waxes bolder in the truth by all the conflicts to which he is called; and summons up unwonted powers in proclaiming the gospel which he preaches at the peril of his life. Standing in jeopardy every hour, with an eye full on eternity, and fearless of every foe, is it surprising that, with surpassing energy and power, the apostles declared the gospel of the grace of God to their fellow-men?

5. They preached in God's name, and were sustained by the undoubted assurance of his support.

They were ambassadors for God; and, supported by his authority, had great boldness in declaring the messages of his grace. If God be for us, who can be against us? Strong in the Lord and in the power of his might, fearless of danger and of death, they gave themselves up to the guidance of his Spirit, speaking as the Holy Ghost gave



them utterance; and, like their Lord, teaching as one having authority, and not as the Scribes.

After those fragments of the public addresses of Christ and the apostles, which are recorded in the Scriptures, no example of a similar discourse in the primitive church remains unto us, until we come down to Origen, in the third century. It is, however, generally admitted, that such familiar remarks, in connection with the reading of the Scriptures, continued uniformly to constitute a part of the social and public worship of the primitive Christians. Such instructions were expected particularly from the presbyters, Acts 20: 28. 1 Pet. 5: 2; but the privilege of public speaking was not restricted to them. The freedom of their worship permitted any one, with the exception of the female sex, to speak in their assemblies. Nor was it originally the exclusive or principal office of the presbyter to perform this part of their public worship.¹ Hilary's testimony to this effect has already been given.² Origen, again, was invited by the bishops of Caesarea and the vicinity to preach in public, though he had never been ordained as a presbyter.³

Tertullian, and Justin Martyr, each say enough to show that the churches of Africa and of Asia, respectively, still conducted their religious worship in the freedom and simplicity of earlier days. "We meet together to read the holy Scriptures, and, when circumstances permit, to admonish one another. In such sacred discourse we establish our faith, we encourage our hope, we confirm our trust, and quicken our obedience to the word by a renewed application of its truths."⁴ The whole account indicates that "the

¹ *Apost. Kirch.*, 1, c. 5. Comp. J. H. Böhm, *Dissertat.* 7. *De Dif. inter ordinem ecclesiast.*, &c., § 39. Eschenberg, *Versuch Religionsvorträge*, p. 85. Rothe, *Anfänge*, Vol I, pp. 155—160.

² Chap 11, p. 340.

³ Euseb., *Eccl. Hist.*, 6, c. 19. Comp. *Lib.* 5, c. 10. *Lib.* 6, 19.

⁴ Tertullian, *Apol.* 39.

brethren" sought, by familiar remarks, and mutual exhortations, to enforce a practical application of the portion of the Scriptures which had been read; and to encourage one another in their religious hopes and duties.

The account from Justin, which has already been given, corresponds with that of Tertullian, with the single exception, that the addresses were from the presiding presbyter, who conducted the worship of the assembly. In both instances it is a *biblical exercise*, designed to enforce a practical application of the truths which have been presented in the reading. Not a single text, but the entire passage from the Scriptures which have been read, is the subject of remark.

The taste of the age is against this style of preaching, and by common consent of pastor and people, it has fallen into neglect. But it has certain peculiar advantages, which deservedly recommend it to the consideration of every minister of Christ.

1. It is recommended by apostolical precedent.

The apostles were directed by wisdom from on high, to adopt, or, if you please, to continue this mode of address in the Christian church. They were content simply to commend the truth to their hearers as God had revealed it. They strove, as the only and ultimate end of all their preaching, to lay the heart and conscience open to the naked truth of God. So presented and applied, it became quick and powerful in producing the end of all preaching,—the conviction and conversion of men.

2. This style of preaching is recommended by its practical efficacy.

Never has the ministry of man been attended with results so interesting and momentous as those which followed the ministrations of these holy men in the first ages of the church, who knew no other style of address, and who



simply sought to give a plain exposition of Scripture, with a direct and pungent application to the hearer.

3. Expository preaching gives variety to the ministrations of the pulpit.

The preacher, by continually offering the hasty suggestions of his own mind, is in danger of falling into a certain train of thought and illustration, which, by frequent recurrence, gives a sameness to his ministrations, monotonous, almost, as the tones of his voice. His sermons, thrown off in quick succession, and the crude conceptions of a mind jaded by the ceaseless recurrence of the same duties, disclose to the hearer only the varied lineaments of the same features, illy disguised by the different scraps of Scripture with which they are headed. But in the various portions of the sacred volume there is a variety, a richness, and fertility which no uninspired intellect ever possessed; and these, if successively introduced, may be an exhaustless theme of discourse,—ever new, gratefully diversified, and yet alike interesting and edifying in their turn. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. 2 Tim. 3: 16. Why for ever set this aside, to inflict upon our auditory what is too often the production of a barren mind, or a jaded intellect and cold heart?

4. Expository addresses afford the happiest means of applying religious instruction to all classes and conditions of men.

In a consecutive exposition of the Scriptures a vast variety of topics arises, which, discreetly handled, may be the subject of remark to enforce duties, which otherwise would never come under the teachings of the ministry. A single epistle of Paul, or one of the evangelists, thus expounded, will, in a few months, lead the preacher to remark upon

many subjects, which, otherwise, in the whole course of his ministry, might never find a place in his public discourses.

5. The preparation of such discourses affords the preacher the happiest opportunity of enriching his own mind with varied and profitable learning.

Many a sermon is written without the addition of a single valuable thought, or of a new fact to the acquisitions of the preacher. But how varied the inquiries which arise in the attempt to elucidate a portion of Scripture. Geography, history, philology, philosophy, theology doctrinal and practical, all are put in requisition, and bring their varied contributions to elucidate the sacred page, and to enrich his own mind. His lexicons are recalled from the neglected shelf. His Bible, in the original tongue, is resumed. He drinks at these sacred fountains, refreshing alike to the heart and the mind, and returns to his people with fresh acquisitions, that make him both a wiser man and a better minister.

Finally. This mode of address, above all others, gives the preacher opportunity to bring the truth of God, with its living, life-giving power, to bear upon the minds of his people.

That which the preacher speaks is now no longer his own. It is Jehovah's awful voice which speaks, calling upon the hearer to listen, obedient to his high commands. The audience may cavil at the preacher, or sit by in cold indifference, but they have a solemn interest in these messages of God to them. Opposition is silenced, and the ear is opened to attend while Jehovah speaks. What would have fallen powerless from the preacher's lips, now comes with authority and power divine, to convince and convert the soul. Multitudes, on earth and in heaven, can attest the mighty power of divine truth, thus plainly set forth from the word of God, in bringing them to repentance. Let the minister observe the moral efficacy of his various



ministrations, and he will find that when he has ceased to preach himself, when he has withdrawn *himself* most from the notice of his hearers, and brought forward the word of God, to unfold unto them its tremendous truths, then has he seen the happiest fruits of his labors. Let him return, after a long absence, to the former scene of his labors, and he will find, that while his hearers have forgotten his most elaborate sermons, they still remember his faithful expositions of the word of God in the evening lecture.

II. Homilies in the Greek church.⁵

From the third century, the homilies of the Greek and Roman fathers are so different, that it will be most convenient to consider them separately, confining our attention to the period in the Greek church, from Origen, A. D. 230, to Chrysostom, A. D. 400, and in the Roman, from Cyprian to Augustine, through the same period.

With Origen a new style of public address began in the Greek church, which had, indeed, some advantages, but was attended by many and still greater faults. The following brief outline of the characteristics of the style of preaching now under consideration, and of the circumstances which led to its adoption, is given chiefly from Eschenburg, who is admitted to have written with more candor and discrimination than any other.

1. Origen introduced that allegorical mode of interpreting the Scriptures, which for a long time continued to darken the sacred page which it affected to illustrate. Not content with a plain and natural elucidation of the historical sense of the text, it sought for some hidden meaning,

⁵ The writers of the period under consideration, are Origen, A. D. 230, Gregory of Neocæsarea, A. D. 240; Athanasius, A. D. 325; Basil the Great, A. D. 370; Gregory of Nyssa, A. D. 370; Gregory of Nazianzen, A. D. 379. Among others of less note, may be classed, Methodius, A. D. 290; Macarius, A. D. 373; Ephraem the Syrian, A. D. 370; Amphilogianus, A. D. 370—375; and Nectarius, A. D. 381.

darkly shadowed forth in allegorical, mystical terms. Great as was Origen in talent, industry, and learning, he showed still greater weakness in the childish fancies in which he indulged as an interpreter of Scripture. The great respect in which he was held gave currency to his mode of preaching, so that he became the father of all that allegorical nonsense, which for a long time continued to dishonor the public preaching of the ancient church.

2. The sermons of the period under consideration, were occupied with profitless, polemical discussions, and speculative theories.

The question with the preacher seems too often to have been, not what will produce the fruits of holy living, and prepare the hearer for eternity; but how to controvert the opinions of another; worthless dogmas, it may be, deserving no serious consideration. The speculations in which the preacher indulged were advanced without due regard to their *practical tendency*. Whether those who adopted them would be made wiser or better, was a question not often asked. Doctrinal points, rather than moral truths, were taught from the Scriptures; and often were sentiments condemned which were truly just, while others were extolled which were wholly worthless.

3. The preachers of this period claimed most undeserved respect for their own authority.

Flattered by the great respect in which they were held, and the confidence in which the people waited on them for instruction, they converted the pulpit into a stage for the exhibition of their own pertinacity, ignorance, and folly. They manifested an angry impatience at the errors of others, persecuted them for following their own convictions, and condemned them for refusing assent to arbitrary forms, which they themselves prescribed as conditions of salvation. With all their self-conceit, they manifested a time-serving spirit. According as the opinions of the court and of the



principal men in the nation favored one religious party or another, were they more or less reserved in exposing the errors of the same. The polemic discourses from the pulpit changed with every change of administration; and what a short time since was advanced as wholesome truth, under a change of circumstances, came to be denounced as damnable heresy.

4. The sermons of this period were as faulty in style, as they were exceptionable in other characteristics which have been mentioned.

Not only was the simplicity which characterized the teachings of Christ and of the apostles, in a great measure lost, in absurd and puerile expositions of Scripture, and corrupted by the substitution of vain speculations, derived especially from the Platonic philosophy, but the style of the pulpit was in other respects vitiated and corrupt. Philosophical terms and rhetorical flourishes, forms of expression extravagant and far-fetched, biblical expressions unintelligible to the people, unmeaning comparisons, absurd antitheses, spiritless interrogations, senseless exclamations and bombast, disfigure the sermons of the period now under consideration.

Causes which contributed to form the style above-described.

1. The prevalence of pagan philosophy.

The preacher was compelled to acquaint himself with the philosophical speculations of the day, to expose their subtleties, and he unconsciously fell into a similar mode of philosophizing.

2. The conversion of many philosophers to Christianity, especially at the beginning of this period, had an influence to corrupt the simplicity of the Christian system, both in doctrine and in discourse.

They sought to incorporate their philosophical principles with the doctrines of Christianity, and to introduce their rhetoric and sophistries into the discourses of the clergy. Every discussion gave occasion for various sentences and forms of expression unknown in Scripture. But to give greater authority to such discussions, certain phrases were selected from the Scriptures, to which a meaning was attached similar to the philosophical terms in use; out of this strange combination, a new dialect was formed for the pulpit. In this way the few and simple doctrines of Christianity received from an impure philosophy many additions from time to time; and by continual controversy were darkened the more, and gradually expunged from the instructions of the pulpit.

3. The evil in question was aggravated by the want of suitable preparation for the ministry.

Some betook themselves to the schools of the Platonic philosophy, and became practised in the arts of the orators and sophists of the day. Others sought, in deserts and in cloisters, to prepare themselves for the sacred office. Here they brooded over what they had previously read and heard. Here, removed from intercourse with men, they only learned to be visionary, perverse, self-willed and immoral. The consequence was, that their instructions abounded with distorted, false views of the virtues and doctrines, and of the means of moral improvement.

4. Ignorance of the original languages of the Scriptures, and of just principles of interpretation, contributed to the same result.

Philo, Plato, and others, were read, instead of the evangelists, of Paul, and the other apostles. The Hebrew was little cultivated, and the true principles of exegesis unknown.

5. A blind self-conceit had much influence in setting aside the great truths and duties of religion.

Forgetful of the religious edification of his people, the preacher was occupied with speculations upon trifling and unmeaning things. These accordingly were the topics of his public discourses, whenever he was not employed in the endeavor to expose some heretical dogma.

6. The religious controversy of the day gave an unprofitable direction to the instructions of the pulpit.

The preacher had constantly the attitude of a polemic, watching with a vigilant eye any defection from the truth, and hastening to oppose the outbreak of some destructive heresy.

7. The increasing consideration of the bishop.

This was itself a new source of polemical discussion. As bishops at the head of their churches, and, in the larger cities, already having great authority over the presbyters and deacons, they would not receive from these the least contradiction. If any reflection was cast upon the dignity of the bishop, justly or unjustly, that was enough. Not content merely to be honored, the bishops would be implicitly obeyed. To this demand some one perhaps ventures to dissent. If ever one has the courage or inconsideration to advance an opposite opinion concerning a doctrine of Scripture, or a sentiment avowed in a public address, he is if possible rejected from office by the bishop; and, for what he may have said or written, is condemned as a heretic.

8. The increasing formalities of public worship had no small influence in diverting the mind from the true object of public religious instruction.

These forms, of which Christianity in its original simplicity had so few, were greatly multiplied; great attention was paid to the adorning of the churches; festivals became numerous. The effect of all which was to turn off the mind from the essential truths and duties of religion, and fasten attention upon other things, which have not the

least influence in promoting the spiritual improvement of man. The preacher sought to adapt his addresses to these forms and festivals,⁶ and often fell into extravagances and fanaticism. Monks, ascetics and recluses were extolled as saints, and commended as examples of piety.

Finally, the effeminacy, the melancholy, and the love of the marvellous which have ever characterized the Eastern nations, infused something of the same spirit into the religious discourses of their preachers.

III. Homilies in the Latin church.

The writers of this same period, from A. D. 250 to 400, to whom reference is had in the following remarks, are Cyprian, Zeno and Ambrose. The characteristic distinctions between these and the Greek fathers whose public discourses have been considered, are given by our author in the following summary.

1. The Latins were inferior to the Greeks, in their exegesis of the Scriptures. They accumulated a multitude of passages, without just discrimination or due regard to their application to the people.

2. They interested themselves less with speculative and polemic theology than the Greeks.

3. They insisted upon moral duties more than the Greeks, but were equally unfortunate in their mode of treating of these topics, by reason of the undue importance which they attached to the forms and ceremonies of re-

⁶ "Of this depraved state of the public mind, we have a striking example from Socrates. In relating the endless discords of the churches in regard to their rites and festivals, he refers to the decision of the apostolical council, Acts 15: 23—30, to show that the apostles gave no instructions touching these forms, but insisted only on moral duties, and proceeds to say, "some, however, regardless of these practical injunctions, regard with indifference, every species of licentiousness, but contend as if for their lives, for the days when a festival should be held."—*Eccl. Hist.*, Lib. 5, c. 22.

ligion; hence their reverence for saints and relics, their vigils, fasts, penances and austerities of every kind.

4. In method and style the homilies of the Latin fathers are greatly inferior to those of the Greeks.

Causes productive of these characteristics.

1. The lack of suitable means of education.

They neither had schools of theology, like the Greeks, nor were they as familiar with the literature and oratory of their own people. Ambrose was promoted to the office of bishop, almost without any preparation for its duties.

2. Ignorance of the original languages of the Bible.

Of the Hebrew they knew nothing; of the original of the New Testament they knew little; and still less of all that was essential to a right interpretation of it. When they resorted to the Scriptures, it was too frequently to oppose heresy by an indiscriminate accumulation of texts. When they attempted to explain, it was by perpetual allegories.

3. The want of suitable examples, and a just standard of public speaking.

Basil, Ephraem the Syrian, and the two Gregories, were contemporaries, and were mutual helps and incentives to one another. Others looked to them as patterns for public preaching. But such advantages were unknown in the Latin church. The earlier classic authors of Greece and Rome were discarded, from bigotry; or, through ignorance, so much neglected, that their influence was little felt.

4. The unsettled state of the Western churches should be mentioned in this connection.

Persecuted and in exile at one time, at another engaged in fierce and bloody contests among themselves,⁷ the

⁷ The contests for the election of bishops often ran so high as to end in bloodshed and murder, of which an example is given in Walch's *History der Papste*, p. 87. *Ammianus Marcellinus*, Lib. 27, c. 3.

preachers of the day had little opportunity to prepare for their appropriate duties. Literature was neglected. Under Constantine, Rome herself ceased to be the seat of the fine arts, and barbarism began its disastrous encroachments upon the provinces of the Western church.

5. The increasing importance of the bishop's office.

Their pride and neglect of duty as preachers kept pace with their advancement in authority. As in the Greek church, so also in the Latin, this sense of their own importance gave a polemic character to their preaching. But in this church they were careful, not merely to assert and defend their own dignity; many also became indolent and pleasure-loving, as their incomes increased; or they manifested a spirit equally foreign from that of a public religious teacher. They sought, in every possible way, to promote their own power and self-aggrandizement. They created new and needless offices, better suited to assist them to command, to govern, and to maintain their dignity, than to promote the instruction and edification of the people. By such means they sought to blind the eyes of the people, and to forestall the popular sentiment, which otherwise might be too easily formed against their pride and neglect of duty as religious teachers.

Others sought, by the appearance of great sanctity, by celibacy and seclusion, by fasting and the like, to maintain and to augment their importance. In the practice of these austerities, they wasted so much time that little remained to be employed in preparation for public speaking.

6. The increase of the ceremonies and forms of public worship.

The effect of all these was, to give importance to the bishop; and, in his zeal for the introduction and general adoption of them, the essential points of the Christian religion were forgotten. Need we relate with what zeal Victor, the Roman bishop, engaged in the controversies re-

specting Easter and the ceremonies connected with it? What complicated rites were involved with the simple ordinance of baptism, and the abuses with which they were connected; what importance, what sanctity, was ascribed to their fasts, and what controversies arose between the Latin and the Greek church from the reluctance of the latter to adopt the rites of the former? What incredible effects were ascribed to the sign of the cross?⁸ Where indeed would the enumeration end, if one should attempt a specification of all the ceremonies, and of their abuses, which were introduced in the period under consideration. Thus ancient Episcopacy touched alike with its withering blight the ministrations of the pulpit, both in the churches of the East and of the West.⁹

To the foregoing view we subjoin a single remark or two.

1. Episcopacy is an incumbrance to a faithful minister in the discharge of his appropriate duties.

The reader has noticed what obstacles these ancient prelatists of the church encountered in their ministry. So much attention was requisite to guard their Episcopal prerogatives, such vigilance to root out the heresies that were perpetually shooting up in rank luxuriance within the church; so much time was wasted in useless discussions about rites and forms, festivals and fasts, and all the ceremonials of their religion, as, sadly to divert their attention from their appropriate work of winning souls to Christ.

All this is only the natural result of an exclusive and formal religion. Such a religion addresses itself powerfully to strong, original principles of our nature. And the results are as distinctly manifest in modern, as in ancient

⁸ Cyprian, Lib. 2, Testimon. adv. Inđaos., c. 21, 22. Lactant. Instit., Lib. 4, c. 27, 28, Vol. I, p. 594, ed. Bünemann.

⁹ Many other particulars in relation to the homilies of the ancient church are given in Christian Antiquities, c. 12, pp. 237—252.

prelacy. There is an undue importance given to the externals of religion, which have little or no place in the ministrations of the pulpit. In this perpetual lauding of the church, her rites, and her liturgy, in this conscious reliance upon her ordinances, in this sanctimonious exclusiveness, which boasts of apostolical succession and divine right, in this sleepless vigilance to guard against any imaginable departure from the rubric,—in all this, we see the influences still at work, which wrought such mischief in the ministry of ancient prelacy; and embarrassing the faithful preaching of Christ and him crucified. The charges of the bishops and the sermons of the clergy, show distinctly the strong bias which the mind receives from a religion surcharged with ceremonials, and boasting its exclusive prerogatives. These unconsciously assume undue importance to the preacher's mind. His Bible furnishes him a text; but too frequently his rubric suggests his subject.¹⁰ Such is the natural course of the human mind. It fastens strongly upon what is outward and sensual; forgetful of that which is inward and spiritual. "The Divine Founder of Christianity, as if in wise jealousy of a tendency which may be so easily abused, confined the ceremonials of his religion within the strictest limits."

¹⁰ Even the *Christian Observer*, for May, 1804, has an article from a churchman, gravely inquiring, not after the best means for the conversion of men, and their continuance in the Christian faith, but for the "most effectual means which a faithful clergyman can take during his life, *in order to prevent his flock from becoming Dissenters after his death!*" As though the highest ends of a faithful Episcopal minister were, not to save the souls of his people, but to save them from becoming *Dissenters*. In the foregoing remarks, allusion has hardly been made to the Puseyite party in that church; and yet a late writer claims on that side, *nine-thirteenths* of the charges which have been delivered by English bishops, within a short time last past; and even of the remaining four, only one was decidedly against the party. One of this class, in place of the great doctrines of the gospel, is intent, almost with a mystic monomania, upon the merest trifles,—clerical costume and pulpit etiquette, chaplets, crosses, crucifixes, wax candles, flowers, "red," "white," and "intermingled."

"Nescio quid meditans nugarum et totus in illis."

According to the canons of the church, which were adopted in 1603, "whosoever shall affirm that the rites and ceremonies of that church are 'wicked, antichristian, or *superstitious*,' shall be excommunicated, *ipso facto*, and not restored until he repent, and publicly revoke his wicked errors." Can. 6. The seventy-fourth canon directs that archbishops and bishops shall wear the accustomed apparel of their degrees, and that the subordinate orders shall "wear gowns with standing sleeves, straight at the hands; or wide sleeves, with hoods or tippets, of silk or sarcenet, and square caps." They are not to wear "wrought night-caps, but only plain night-caps of black silk, satin, or velvet." At home, they may wear "any comely or scholar-like apparel, provided it be not cut or pinkt; and that in public they go not in their doublet and hose, without coats or cassocks; and that they wear not any light-colored stockings." All this is gravely entered in the canons of the church, and "ratified by letters-patent from the king, under the great seal of England, after having been diligently read with great contentment and comfort."

2. As a conservative principle, to preserve the unity of the church, Episcopacy is entirely inadequate.

If the unity of the church consist in a *name* merely, and in *forms*,—in the use of a prayer-book and surplice,—then may Episcopacy be said to preserve this unity; but in what else have they of this communion ever been united? how else have they kept the unity of the faith? In the ancient church, what was the success of the Episcopal expedient to preserve the unity of the church? Let Milton reply. "Heresy begat heresy with a certain monstrous haste of pregnancy in her birth; at once born and bringing forth. Contentions, before brotherly, were now hostile. Men went to choose their bishop, as they went to a pitched field, and the day of his election was like the sacking of a city, sometimes ending in the blood of thousands; . . . so that,

instead of finding prelacy an impeacher of schism and faction, the more I search, the more I grow into all persuasion to think rather, that faction and she, as with a spousal ring, are wedded together, never to be divorced." ¹¹

What idea does the profession of Episcopacy at present give of one's religious faith? Is he Calvinistic, Arminian, or Unitarian; high-church or low-church; Puseyitish, demipopish, or what? "The religion of the Church of England," says Macaulay, "is so far from exhibiting that unity of doctrine which Mr. Gladstone represents as her distinguishing glory, that it is, in fact, a bundle of religious systems without number. It comprises the religious system of Bishop Tomline, and the religious system of John Newton, and all the religious systems that lie between them. It comprises the religious system of Mr. Newman, and the religious system of the Archbishop of Dublin, and of all the religious systems that lie between. All these different opinions are held, avowed, preached, printed, within the pale of the church, by men of unquestioned integrity and understanding." ¹²

As an expedient, therefore, to preserve the unity of the church, Episcopacy must be pronounced an entire failure. And yet they of this denomination present the extraordinary spectacle, of the most discordant sect in all Christendom boasting the conservative powers of their religion as its distinguishing glory, and urging a return to this, their "one body in Christ," as the only means of preserving the unity of the church!

¹¹ Prose Works, Vol. I, pp. 121, 122.

¹² Review of Gladstone's Church and State.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE BENEDICTION.

I. Origin and import of the rite.

It seems to have been, from remote antiquity, a common belief, that, both a blessing and a curse, when pronounced with solemnity, are peculiarly efficacious upon those who are the subjects of it.¹ So common was this belief, that it gave rise to the proverb, "The blessing and the curse fail not of their fulfilment." The consequences were momentous, according to the character of the person from whom the prophetic sentiment proceeded. The blessing of the aged patriarch, of the prophet, the priest, and the king, was sought with peculiar interest, and their execration deprecated with corresponding anxiety. Of the king's curse we have an instance, in 1 Sam. 14: 24. Saul adjured the people, and said, Cursed be the man that eateth any food until the evening, that I may be avenged on mine enemies. Comp. Josh. 6: 26, with 1 Kings 16: 34. The blessing and the curse of Noah upon his sons, Gen. 9: 25—28, and of Moses upon the children of Israel, Deut. xxviii and xxxiii, are familiar illustrations of the same sentiment; as is also the history of Balaam, whose curse upon Israel Balak sought with so much solicitude, Num. xxii, xxiii, xxiv. The blessing of the patriarchs Isaac and Jacob, respectively, was sought with peculiar anxiety, as conveying to their posterity the favor of God and the smiles of his providence. Gen. xxvii,

¹ *Dira detestatio nulla expiatur victima.*—*Her. Epod.*, 5, 90. Hence, also, the expression, *Thyestee precas*, in the same ode. Comp. *Iliad*, 9, 455.

and xlviii, xlix. Comp. Deut. xxxiii. The son of Sirach expresses a similar sentiment. 3: 9. "The blessing of the father establisheth the houses of children; but the curse of the mother rooteth out foundations."

With the question relative to the prophetic character of these patriarchal benedictions we are not now concerned. It is sufficient for our present purpose that the benediction of patriarchs, of parents, and of all those who were venerable for their age, or their religious or official character, was regarded as peculiarly efficacious in propitiating the favor of God towards those upon whom the blessing was pronounced.

In addition to all this, the Aaronitic priesthood were divinely constituted the mediators between God and his people Israel. They were the intercessors of his people before his altar; and stood in their official character, as daysmen between the children of Israel and Jehovah their God. In this official capacity, Aaron and his sons were directed to bless the children of Israel, saying, "The Lord bless thee and keep thee. The Lord make his face shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee. The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee and give thee peace." Thus were they to put the name of God upon the children of Israel, and the promise of God was that he would bless them. Num. 6: 24—27. In conformity with this commission to the house of Aaron, it was an universal custom in the worship of the Jews; both in the temple and in their synagogues, for the people to receive the blessing at the mouth of the priests, the sons of Aaron, alone. If none of these priests were present, another was accustomed to *invoke* the blessing of God, supplicating in the prayer the triple blessings of the benediction, that the assembly might not retire unblessed; but this was carefully distinguished from the sacerdotal benediction.²

² Vitringa, *De Synagoga*, Lib. 3, part 2, c. 20.

This view of the subject may perhaps aid us in forming a just idea of the nature and import of the sacerdotal benediction. The term *benediction* is used to express both the act of *blessing*, and that of *consecrating*,—two distinct religious rites. The sacerdotal benediction, according to the views above expressed, seems to be *a brief prayer, offered with peculiar solemnity unto God, for his blessing upon the people, by one who has been duly set apart to the service of the ministry, as an intercessor with God in their behalf.*³

Both this and the other forms of benediction, in the acts of consecration and dedication, are exclusively the acts of the clergy. Only the higher grades of the clergy were permitted, in the ancient church, to enjoy this prerogative. The council of Ancyra and others restricted it to bishops and presbyters.⁴ And in all Christian churches it is still a general rule, that none but a clergyman is entitled to pronounce the benediction. In the Lutheran church none but an *ordained* clergyman is duly authorized to perform this rite. The licentiate accordingly includes himself in the petition, saying, not as the ordained minister, *The Lord bless you, &c.*, but *The Lord bless us*. And if a layman is officiating, he includes the form of benediction in his prayer, varying yet again the emphasis, and saying, *The Lord bless us, &c.* Their doctrine is, that the minister stands in *the place of Christ*, to bless the people in his name, and that it is an actual conferring of the blessing of God upon the people; of which, however, none are partakers but those who receive it in faith. Such, again, is the Roman Catholic doctrine of the priesthood, derived from the prelacy of the ancient church. Immediately upon the rise of Episcopacy, the clergy began to claim kindred with

³ According to Ambrose, the benediction is—*sanctificationis et gratiarum votiva collatio*—*votiva*; quia benedicens vovet et optat.—*J. Gretseri*, Vol. V, 178, in Lib. 1, De Benedictionibus.

⁴ Conc. Nic., c. 18. Ancyra, c. 2. Arelat., 1, c. 15. Constit. Apost., Lib. 8, c. 23.

the Jewish priesthood. The bishop became the representative of the Lord Jesus Christ; and the priesthood, like that of the Jews, the *mediators* between God and man. This delusive dogma changed the character of the Christian ministry. They now became the priests of a *vicarious religion*, ministering before the Lord, *for the people*, as the medium of communicating his blessing to them. This perversion of the Christian idea of the ministry, which in an evil hour was put forth as the doctrine of the church, opened the way for infinite superstitions, and did more harm to spiritual Christianity than any single delusion that ever afflicted the church of Christ. It is remarkable, however, that neither the New Testament nor primitive Christianity knows any thing of a vicarious priesthood.

With reference to the intercessory office of the Jewish priesthood, Christ our mediator and intercessor with the Father is, indeed, styled our great High Priest. Heb. 4: 14. Comp., also, 2: 17. 3: 1. 5: 10. His benediction he pronounced upon the little children, when he took them in his arms and blessed them. Mark 10: 16. In his separation from his disciples at Bethany, when he was about to return unto his Father in heaven, he ended his instructions to them by pronouncing upon them his final benediction. "He lifted up his hands and blessed them; and it came to pass, that while he blessed them, he was parted from them and carried up into heaven." Luke 24: 50, 51. These acts, however, have no reference to the sacerdotal benedictions of the Jewish priesthood. They are only the expression of the benevolent spirit of our Lord; the manifestations of that love wherewith he loved his own to the end.

The apostles, also, frequently begin and end their epistles with an invocation of the blessing of God upon those to whom they write; sometimes in a single sentence, and sometimes with a triple form of expression, analogous to the Aaronitic benediction. But these, again, appear to be



only general and customary expressions of the benevolent desires of the writer towards those whom he addresses. They are a brief prayer to the Author of all good for his blessing upon the persons addressed. Whatever be the form of the salutation, it is only expressive of the wide wish of benevolence which swelled the hearts of the apostles towards the beloved brethren to whom they wrote.

But in all the writings of the New Testament we have no indication of the use of the *sacerdotal benediction*, in the Jewish and prelatical sense of the term, in the religious worship of the apostolical churches. It appears, indeed, not to have been a religious rite, either in the apostolical or primitive churches, during the first and second centuries. Neither the apostolical fathers, nor Justin Martyr, nor Tertullian, make any mention of the sacerdotal benediction. This omission of a religious rite, in itself so becoming and impressive, is the more remarkable in the *primitive Christians*, inasmuch as they, in other things, so closely imitated the rites of the Jewish synagogue, in which this was an established and important part of their religious worship.

In regard to the reasons of this omission, writers upon the subject are not agreed. Some suppose that the secret discipline of the church afforded occasion for this omission. The doctrine of the Trinity was one of these sacred mysteries, which were carefully concealed from the uninitiated. So scrupulous were the churches on this point, that, for a time, the use even of the Lord's prayer was prohibited in public assemblies for religious worship; because it was thought that even this conveyed an allusion to this sacred and hidden mystery.

Others suppose that the occurrence of the sacred name of God, יהוה, to the Jews, *verbum horrendi carminis*, which none but the high-priest was ever permitted to pronounce, and he only once a year, on the great day of the atonement, that the occurrence of this awful name of Jehovah, was, to

the early Christians, a reason for omitting the sacerdotal benediction.⁵

But the reader, we doubt not, has anticipated us in another reason altogether, for the extraordinary omission of the sacerdotal benediction in the primitive church. Was it not the superintending providence of God, which graciously withheld the apostles and primitive Christians from adopting a rite, rendered obsolete by the great atoning sacrifice of the High Priest of our profession, and susceptible of unutterable abuses, as the subsequent history of the church too clearly shows? It is another instance of those remarkable *omissions*, of which Archbishop Whately has largely treated, and with consummate ability, in different works. He has noticed the wise precaution with which God in his providence so ordered, that no possible trace should be found in the primitive church, of any prescribed mode of church government, to the exclusion of all others; or of a creed, or catechism, or confession, or form of prayer, or liturgy, upon which superstition could seize, as an invariable rule of faith and practice, and abuse, to support a sanctionious religion, which should conform to the letter, but disregard the spirit of his word. Such an omission he regards as "literally miraculous." Copying so closely after the synagogue, and yet, against all their Jewish prejudices, dropping this rite of their synagogue-worship, the apostles must, on the same principle, be supposed to have been supernaturally withheld from taking that course which would *naturally* have appeared to them so desirable.

The apostolical benediction, then, is, in spirit and in import, altogether unlike the Aaronitic benediction of the Jews, or that of the prelatical blessing of the bishop and priest. It is nothing more than a brief prayer; a benevo-

⁵ Siegel, *Handbuch*, 2, p. 114. J. H. Haenen, *Exercit. de ritu benedictionis sacerdotatis*. Jenæ, 1682, cited by Siegel. Augusti, *Denkwürdigkeiten*, 10, pp. 179, 180.

lent desire, offered with solemnity unto God, for his blessing upon the people. The several forms of expression are one in meaning, and express the desire, that the blessing of God, both spiritual and temporal, may be, and abide with, the worshipping assembly. The clergyman alone pronounces the benediction, not in the vicarious character of mediator or intercessor between God and his people, but solely in conformity with the apostolic precept, requiring all things to be done decently and in order. We now return to the prelatical use of the benediction.

II. Mode of administering the rite.

The Jewish priests pronounced the blessing standing and facing the people, with the arms uplifted, and the hands outspread, with a peculiar configuration of the fingers;⁶ the congregation standing meanwhile. The attitude of the assembly and of the officiating priest was the same in the Christian church. But the words of the benediction were *chanted*, and the sign of the cross given.

The sign of the cross, both in the Eastern and Western church, was an indispensable rite in the benediction. The rite is still observed, not only by the Roman Catholics, but even by many Protestants. The Lutherans make use of this sign, not only in the benediction, but in the consecration of the elements, in baptism, ordination, confirmation, absolution, &c. The church of England also retained the rite in baptism.⁷ But how extensively it is observed at present, the writer is not informed.

⁶ Vitringa, *De Synagoga*, Lib. 3, p. 2, c. 20, p. 1118. Vitringa, *Hadria, Reland, Antiq., Sac. Vet. Heb.*, p. 102.

⁷ See canon 30, where it is sanctioned and defended at length. The following is given, among many instances of the studied and superstitious formalities which have been observed, to give a mysterious significancy to this sign of the cross in the benediction. "Graeci aequae atque Latini, quinque digitis, et tota manu crucem signantes benedicunt. Differunt quod Latini, omnibus digitis extensis, Graeci indice medio ac minimo extensis ac modicum incurvatis, non ita tamen, ut inter se respondeant; sed pollex directione sit, rectaque respiciens, medius, pollicis incurvatione, introrsum

The benediction was sometimes sung; sometimes chanted; and sometimes, pronounced as a prayer. There was no general rule or uniform custom on the subject. But when offered in connection with the responses of the people, it is sung and the responses chanted. Such at least is, according to Augusti, the custom of the Lutheran church, and to some extent also in the reformed churches.

In many places the benediction is pronounced twice, once at the close of the sermon, and again at the conclusion of the worship.

In Catholic churches the congregation kneel, or incline the head, while the benediction is pronounced. The priest, arrayed in clerical robes, stands with uplifted hands and a peculiar configuration of the fingers; speaking in the Latin tongue, in an elevated tone and with a prolonged accent resembling a chant.

REMARKS.

1. The sacerdotal benediction was very early made the means of enhancing the sanctity of the clerical office generally, and especially that of the bishop.

It was supposed to have a peculiar efficacy in propitiating the favor of heaven. A mysterious, magic influence was ascribed to it. Even Chrysostom seems to have supposed that it rendered one invulnerable against the assaults of sin, and the shafts of Satan.⁸ Accordingly it became to

vergat, minimus, inter pollicem et medium dirigatur; pollice super annularis ad sese moderate deflexi unguam apposite id agunt. Qua se ratione et tres divinas personas, digitis nempe tribus extensis; et duas in Christo naturas; duobus ad se junctis, rentur significare."—*Leo Allatius, De Eccl. Occid. et Orient. censens.*, Lib. 3, c. 18, pp. 1357—1361, cited by Augusti.

⁸ Imo vero, mihi ne commodas horas duas, sed tibi ipsi, ut ex oratione patrium aliquam consolationem percipias, ut benedictionibus plenus recedas, ut omni ex parte securus abeas, ut spiritualibus acceptis armis invictus diabolo et inexpligabilis fias.—*Cited by Siegel, Handbuch*, 2, p. 3.



the clergy a convenient means, by which to impress the people with a sense of the peculiar sanctity of their own office, and the importance of the blessings which the people might receive at their hands. Even kings reverently bowed to receive the benediction of the bishops, who, especially, were not slow to take advantage of this popular impression, and early claimed the right exclusively of blessing the people. The subordinate clergy, having been duly consecrated by them, were permitted, in their absence and as their representatives, to pronounce the benediction upon the people. Still the act was virtually that of the bishops. *Qui facit per alium facit per se*. So that all clerical grace centred in the bishop; and from him, through his clergy, descended down upon the people of his diocese.⁹ In this way the rite became the means of exalting the office of the bishop, and of inspiring the people with profound reverence for him and his official character.

2. The sacerdotal benediction was soon perverted from its original and simple use, and bestowed on various occasions, upon a great variety of persons.

If the clerical benediction was attended with such consequences to the people in their religious assemblies, it was natural to expect the same effects upon different classes of persons. Catechumens, accordingly, and candidates for baptism, energumens, penitents, &c. &c., became the separate subjects of this rite. Persons of every description and condition pressed to receive the blessing of the priest. Even in the age of Constantine this rage for the blessing of the clergy was forcibly manifested in its manifold applications to different classes of persons.¹⁰ To what a pitch

⁹ J. H. Boehmer, Jus. Protestant, Lib. 3, tit. 40, § 14, and § 41.

¹⁰ Gretser gives the following instances, among many others, to show in what estimation the blessing of the priest was held. Cum S. Epiphanius episcopus salaminae Cypri Hiores solymis versaretur, *omnis aetatis et sexus turba confluebat offerens parvulas* (ad benedictionem) *pedes deosculans, fimbrias vellens, ita ut gradum promovere non valens, in uno loco vix fluctus*

of extravagant folly and superstition it afterwards arose, is sufficiently manifest in the rituals, missals, and agenda of the Romish church.

3. The perversions of this religious rite afford another illustration of the consequences of a departure from the simplicity and spirituality which become the worship of God.

Possessed of the idea that clerical grace belonged to the ecclesiastical order, which might be imparted to another, by their benediction, men sought on many, and often on frivolous occasions, this blessing. The intervention of this rite became essential in almost all the ordinances of religion, and upon all classes of persons. It became essentially the consecrating act by which men were elected into the different orders and offices of the church. If clerical consecration gave a religious sanctity to men, so might it also to whatever else was to be set apart to a religious use. Hence the consecration, not only of the bread and wine of the eucharist, but of the church, the altar, the bell, the organ, the holy water, the baptismal water, and every thing almost that belonged to the sanctuary, or could be employed in its service.

If the blessing of heaven is in this manner imparted to man, so might it be also to his fields, his flocks, his herds, and whatever else might be employed or improved for his benefit. Indeed it would be difficult to say, who among men, or what amidst all which is devoted to the service of man, has not at some time been the subject of sacerdotal benediction.¹¹

undantis populi sustineret, Vol. V, p. 190. So also the venerable Bede, in his *Hist. Eccl.*, Lib. 3, c. 26. In magna erat veneratione tempore illo religionis habitus, ita ut ubicunque clericus aliquis aut monachus adveniret, gaudenter ab omnibus, tanquam Dei famulus exciperetur, et jam si in itinere pergens inveniretur, etur accurrebant, et flexa cervice, vel manu signari vel ore illius se benedici gaudebant.—*Cited by Gretser*, as above.

¹¹ The Gregorian Sacramentary, for example, specifies the following particulars in which the benediction of the priest, *Benedictio domus—et novae*

When once the mind of man has taken its departure from the great principles of religion, few and simple, whether relating to faith or practice, it wanders, in endless mazes lost, uncertain where or upon what to settle, to be again at rest. So easy and natural, and so disastrous withal is the descent of the human mind, from that which is inward and spiritual in religion, and pure and simple in its manifestation, to that which is outward and formal.

4. The foregoing considerations suggest another strong objection to prelacy;—its tendency to superstition.

It is indeed a besetting sin in man, to give a mis-direction to his religious feelings, by a veneration for objects which are worthy of none; or by an *inordinate* reverence for what is venerable in religion. Every religious ceremony, however appropriate, is liable to degenerate into a mere form, and consequently to become superstitious. But this danger is immensely increased by the multiplication of rites and forms. The attention given to them soon becomes inordinate, extravagant, superstitious. The superstition increases in proportion to the number and insignificance of the objects which are invested with this religious veneration. But is there not much in the Episcopal system, which is justly included in this category? This profound veneration for saints and saints' days, and for things that have been the subject of Episcopal consecration, this punctilious observance of festivals and fasts, this scrupulous adherence to the rubric, and the letter of the prayer-book, this anxious attention to clerical costume, to attitudes and postures,—what is it all but superstition? giving a religious importance to that which has nothing to do with heartfelt and practical religion? Even the bishop of Lon-

domus.—Putei—Uvae vel favi—Ad fruges novas—Ad omnia quae volueris—Crisis novae—Agni et aliarum carniū—Casei et ovorum—Ad quemcunque fructum novarum arborum—Peregrinantium, itinerantium. To which many things have been added, such as Navis—Armorum, enses, pilei et vexilli, Turris, Thalami conjugalis, sepulchri, &c.

don, in a late charge, while he professedly condemns the Oxford superstitions, expresses great anxiety that the rubric should be closely adhered to, wishes all his clergy to preach *in white*, sees "no harm," in two wax candles, *provided they are not lighted*; and approves of the arrangement "lately adopted in several churches, by which the clergyman looks to the *south* while reading prayers, and to the *west* while reading lessons!"

Episcopacy encourages, indirectly, if it does not directly inculcate, the notion of a *vicarious religion*. Ancient prelacy transformed the minister of Christ, under the gospel dispensation, into a Levitical priest. By this means the Christian religion was changed into something more resembling Judaism or Paganism, than Christianity. The priesthood became a distinct order, created by the appointment of God, and invested with high prerogatives as a vicarious propitiatory ministry *for* the people;—the constituted medium of communicating grace from God to man. The nature of the sacraments was changed. The sacramental table became an *altar*, and the contributions of the people an *offering* to the Lord. Papacy has held firmly to this doctrine of a vicarious religion down to the present time. Indeed no small share of the corruptions of this "mystery of iniquity," originated in its false idea of the Christian ministry.

Protestantism at the Reformation was but half divorced from this delusion, and the indications of this principle are still manifest in Protestant Episcopacy. The very name of "*priest*" is carefully retained, one of the second order is not a minister, a presbyter, a pastor, in the ritual, but always a "*priest*." The bishop is a reverend, or right reverend father in God. And then that clerical grace which flows only through this appointed channel of communication between God and man, the grace that is given by the imposition of the bishop's hands, the grace im-



parted to regenerate the soul in baptism, the grace that establishes the soul and seals the covenant in confirmation, the mysterious grace imparted in the benediction; provided always, that the act be duly solemnized by a priest divinely appointed and episcopally ordained,—verily, all these resemble more the ministrations of the Levitical priesthood, than of the pastors and teachers whom Christ gave “for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry.” Behold almost a whole convention moving off in a body to prostrate themselves before their bishop, and receive his blessing. Such are the superstitions connected with the perversions of the benediction.

Momentous consequences followed from the substitution of a vicarious priesthood. No church without a bishop, apostolical succession, divine right, the validity of Episcopal ordination alone, baptismal regeneration, the mysterious efficacy of the sacraments, the grace of Episcopal benediction and confirmation; truly these are awful mysteries; and they affect more or less the whole economy of grace. The appropriate final results of such a faith are exemplified in the mystic movements of the Oxford Tractarians. The great object of these unprotestantizing reformers is to reinstate in the church the prelatical ministry of other days, and to restore a vicarious religion with its endless absurdities and superstitions. Thus “the character of the church of Christ is changed. She is made to stand in the place of the Redeemer, whose work is marred. His atonement is incomplete, his righteousness insufficient. Ceremonies are multiplied, and the kingdom of God is no longer righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. The office of the ministers is of course entirely changed and their true character lost. Thunders more awful than those of Sinai are heard. All is discouragement: the object of the Christian ministry in their hands being apparently to try how difficult, how painful, how uncertain the

Christian's course can be made with that ministry, and how impossible without it!

"In a word, their steps are dark, their ministrations mysterious; suited rather to the office of a priest of some heathen mythology than of ambassadors from Christ, ministers of the everlasting gospel, whose feet are beautiful upon the mountains, as those that bring glad tidings, that publish peace.

"The aspect which it wears towards those of other communions is fearful in the extreme. No purity of faith, no labor of love, no personal piety, no manifestation of the fruits of the Spirit, will avail any thing. Though steadfast in faith, joyful through hope, and rooted in charity, they pass not through the eye of this needle, and shall not see the kingdom of God."

The great evil of such a system is, that it is a religion of forms, of mysterious rites and awful prerogatives. Heaven in mercy save us from such a religion which substitutes these things for the gospel of the grace of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. To Episcopacy in any form, the one great objection which includes almost all others is,—that unavoidably, if not intentionally, it *encourages* that besetting sin of man,—*the innate propensity to substitute the outward form for the inward spirit of religion.*

We close, therefore, this protracted view of the Government and Worship of the Primitive Church, with a deep impression of the wisdom from on high, that guided the apostles in adopting an organization at once so simple and so efficient in promoting the great ends for which the church of Christ was instituted, and in establishing those forms of worship, simple and impressive, which most happily promote that spirituality and sincerity in the worship of God, which alone are well pleasing in his sight. Nor can we resist the conviction, that the substitution of the Episcopal government and worship for the apostolical, was an

efficient cause, if not the principal occasion, of that degeneracy and formality, which soon succeeded to the primitive spirituality and purity of the church. The elegant and forcible language of Robert Hall is the happiest expression which we can give of the conclusion to which we are brought, on the review of the whole subject. "The descent of the human mind, from the spirit to the letter, from what is vital and intellectual to what is ritual and external in religion, is the true source of idolatry and superstition in all the multifarious forms which they have assumed; and as it began early to corrupt the religion of nature, or more properly of patriarchal tradition, so it soon obscured the lustre and destroyed the simplicity of the Christian institute. In proportion as genuine devotion declined, the love of pomp and ceremony increased. The few and simple rites of Christianity were extolled beyond all reasonable bounds; new ones were invented, to which mysterious meanings were attached! till the religion of the New Testament became in process of time as insupportable as the Mosaic law."

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
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The Board of Directors of the A. B. P. and S. S. Society, induced by the numerous and urgent calls which, for a long time, have been made from various sections of the country, for a new collection of Hymns that should be adapted to the wants of the churches generally, resolved, in the year 1841, to take immediate measures for the accomplishment of this object. With this view, a committee, consisting of Rev. W. T. Brantly, D. D., of South Carolina, Rev. J. L. Dagg, of Alabama, Rev. R. B. C. Howell, of Tennessee, Rev. S. W. Lynd, D. D., of Ohio, Rev. J. B. Taylor, of Virginia, Rev. S. P. Hill, of Maryland, Rev. G. B. Ide and R. W. Griswold, of Pennsylvania, and Rev. W. E. Williams, D. D., of New York, was appointed to prepare and superintend the proposed selection. It was, however, subsequently ascertained that a similar work had been undertaken by Messrs. Gould, Kendall & Lincoln, Publishers, of Boston; and that Rev. B. Stow and Rev. S. F. Smith, whose services they had engaged, had already commenced their labor. From the well-known ability of these gentlemen, there seemed good reason to expect a valuable collection, and one that would fully meet the end which the Board contemplated. In order, therefore, to avoid the unnecessary multiplication of Hymn Books, it was deemed expedient by the Board to unite, if possible, with the above-mentioned Publishers. Accordingly, the manuscript of Messrs. Stow and Smith having been examined, and found quite satisfactory, arrangements were made to have the proof-sheets, as they were issued from the press, submitted to the committee of the Board, with the understanding, that if, after such alterations and improvements as might be suggested, it should meet their approval, the Board would adopt it as their own. This approval having been obtained, the Board voted, unanimously, to adopt and publish the work, and have negotiated with Gould, Kendall & Lincoln, to that effect.

Signed by order and on behalf of the Board,
J. M. PACE, Cor. Sec. Am. Pub. S. S. Soc.

Certificate of the Committee appointed by the Am. Baptist Publication and Sunday School Society.

The undersigned, having been requested by the Board of Directors of the Am. Bap. Publication and S. S. Society to examine the proof-sheets of "THE PSALMIST," edited by Rev. B. Stow and Rev. S. F. Smith, and to suggest such emendations as might seem expedient to render the work more acceptable to the churches throughout the country, hereby certify, that they have performed the service assigned them, and unite in recommending the work as one well adapted to the purpose for which it was designed.

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From the Professors in Newton Theological Institution.

Union of judgment in regard to all the principles which should regulate the preparation of a Hymn Book, both as to the character of the hymns, and as to the omission and alterations in the case of selected hymns that have long been in use, is not to be expected. We are free, however, to say, that in copiousness of subject, in adaptation to the various occasions of worship, in devout and poetic character, and in general excellence, we regard the work as eminently superior to collections now in common use.

BARNAS SEARS, *Pres. and Prof. Christian Theology.*

IRAH CHASE, *Prof. Ecclesiastical History.*

H. J. RIPLEY, *Prof. Sacred Rhetoric and Pastoral Duties.*

H. B. HACKETT, *Prof. Bib. Literature and Interpretation.*

Testimony of a Committee of the Faculty of Hamilton Literary and Theological Institution.

Messrs. GOULD, KENDALL & LINCOLN.—The undersigned have been appointed, by the Faculty of our Institution a Committee to examine the Hymn Book, entitled "The Psalmist," recently published by you, and edited by Rev. B. Stow and Rev. S. F. Smith. It gives us pleasure to state, as the result of our examination, that we consider the work decidedly superior to any similar collection with which we are acquainted. Its materials are drawn from the best sources of sacred lyrical poetry in our language; the arrangement is eminently happy; and the variety of its selections adapts it to almost every occasion. We think the adoption of the work in the Baptist churches of our country would be calculated greatly to elevate that interesting branch of worship with reference to which it is prepared.

A. C. KENDRICK, *Prof. Greek Lan. and Literature.*

J. S. MAGINNIE, *Prof. Biblical Theology.*

T. J. CONANT, *Prof. Heb. & Bib. Crit. & Interpretation.*

J. H. RAYMOND, *Tut. Intel. & Mor. Philos. & Belles-lettres.*

United Testimony of the Pastors of Baptist Churches in Philadelphia and vicinity

We, the undersigned, Pastors of the Baptist Churches in the city of Philadelphia, and its vicinity, having examined "The Psalmist," a new Hymn Book for the use of the Baptist Churches, edited by Rev. Messrs. B. Stow and S. F. Smith, published by the Am. Bap. Pub. S. S. Society, and Gould, Kendall & Lincoln, Boston, most cordially express our conviction that it is decidedly superior to any other Hymn Book with which we are acquainted. In arrangement, it is very natural; in doctrine, it is sound and peculiarly evangelical; in its selection of hymns upon every important subject, it is very copious and judicious; while there is a variety that characterizes no other. Its lyrical excellence places it far above all other compilations, and makes it a delightful companion for the Christian, in private and domestic, as well as public worship. We shall regard that as a happy era in the churches of our denomination, when it shall be universally adopted by them.

GEORGE B. IDE,	HORATIO G. JONES,
J. LANSING BURROWS,	THOS. O. LINCOLN,
A. D. GILLETTE,	F. KETCHAM.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF ASSOCIATIONS AND CONVENTIONS.

Boston Baptist Association, 1843.

Whereas, for some time past, we have felt the need of a new collection of hymns, for the use of our churches in their public worship; and whereas, the new work entitled 'The Psalmist,' edited by two brethren connected with this body, supplies this need, and answers admirably the end for which it was designed, therefore *Resolved*, That in our opinion, The Psalmist is worthy the patronage of the Baptist denomination, and we cordially recommend its adoption in all our churches.

Miami (Ohio), Baptist Association, 1843.

The Committee appointed to report upon a Hymn Book, have attended to the duty assigned them, and report the following as their views. For several reasons, the Committee recommend to the attention of the churches, the new work called 'The Psalmist,' as worthy of special patronage. 1. It is exceedingly desirable that our whole denomination should use in the praises of the sanctuary the same psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. To secure uniformity, we prefer 'The Psalmist,' because it is strictly, and from the foundation designed for the use of Baptist churches,—is not surpassed by any Hymn Book in the world,—and the proprietorship is wholly Baptist, by which the greatest facilities can be furnished for its introduction to the churches, and the perpetuity of its publication. 2. It has been prepared with the greatest care. In no instance has a Hymn Book gone through so thorough a revision; and the influence which is rationally exerted in its favor by the Committee of revision,—by the known qualification of the editors, by the popularity of the Boston publishers, and by the fact that it is connected with the series of the Am. Bap. Pub. Society,—will necessarily give it an ultimate circulation greater than that of any other similar work in the churches. 3. It is a book of very superior merits, and probably will not need any important emendation for a long period to come. The Committee therefore recommend to the churches the adoption of this work as well calculated to elevate the taste and the devotion of the denomination.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

S. W. LYND, *Chairman.*

Philadelphia Baptist Association, 1843.

Resolved, That we request the attention of the churches to The Psalmist, a hymn book, approved by a large committee of distinguished Baptist ministers, in various parts of the United States.

Portsmouth (N. H.), Baptist Association, 1843.

Resolved, That we highly approve of The Psalmist, prepared by Brethren Stow and Smith, and recommend its adoption in all our churches.

Illinois Baptist State Convention, 1843.

Resolved, That, after an examination of the Hymn Book compiled by Messrs. Baron Stow and S. F. Smith, we can cheerfully recommend it to the denomination as being superior to any other work of the kind ever before published, and advise its adoption and use among the churches.

Huron (Ohio), Baptist Association, 1843.

Among the resolutions adopted, was one recommending the new Hymn Book published by the Am. Baptist Publication Society, Philadelphia, and Gould, Kendall & Lincoln, Boston.

Munroe (N. Y.), Baptist Association, 1843.

Resolved, That we recommend to the several churches of this Association, for their adoption, the Hymn Book recently prepared by brethren Baron Stow and S. F. Smith, called "The Psalmist," as being in our estimation the choicest selection of hymns extant, and well adapted to promote the objects of Christian worship.

Bethel (Tenn.), Baptist Association, 1843.

The committee on Hymn Books reported as their choice, "The Psalmist." The report having been received, the Hymn Book was adopted, and recommended to the churches.

Kennebec (Me.), Baptist Association, 1843.

Voted, That we recommend to those churches who are intending to supply themselves with new Hymn Books, to purchase 'The Psalmist,' recently prepared by Rev. Baron Stow and Rev. S. F. Smith; this, in the estimation of those who have examined it, being the best Hymn Book in the English language.

EDITORIAL NOTICES AND REVIEWS.

From an extended notice in the Christian Review.

The Psalmist was originated under circumstances, and from a source, which give it a claim to our respect and attention. Both the editors and publishers of the book are so well and favorably known to the religious community, that their motives in this undertaking will not be called in question. We hazard little in saying, that it is the best collection of hymns ever published in the English language. They have been drawn from the best sources, and probably, from a greater number of authors than those in any other hymn book extant.

The Psalmist contains 1180 hymns, besides doxologies and chants. Of the hymns, 303 are by Dr. Watts, or about one quarter

of the whole collection. Next to Watts, are Doddridge, 57 hymns; Mrs. Steele, 52; Beddome, 41; Montgomery, 33; S. F. Smith, 26; Kelly, 17; John Newton, 16; Charles Wesley, 12; Toplady, Stennett and Cowper, 10 each; Heber, 8; Collyer and Heginbotham, 7 each; Bowring, Mrs. Barbauld, Dwight, Fawcett, and Mrs. Sigourney, 6 each; Hart, Hawes, Needham, and Scott, 5 each; Addison, Bathurst, Fellows, Gibbons, Hemans, Kippis, Tappan, Reed, and H. K. White, 4 each; Conder, Edmeston, Judson, T. Moore, Noel, Raffles, Swain, and Wrangham, 3 each; thirty-two other authors, 2 each; and ninety, 1 each. The hymns are by 161 writers, besides pieces credited to fifty collections of hymns or other works, the authorship of which is unknown. Forty-five are anonymous, being traced neither to author nor collections.

The order of the book is clear and natural, a due respect being paid to the several subjects of religious worship. We question whether it would be possible to arrange a collection of hymns in better order. The numerous objects of Christian benevolence have created a necessity for a much greater variety of hymns than was formerly needed; and of which no book in use furnished the requisite number. The Psalmist meets this deficiency, particularly in hymns upon the subject of missions, the number of which is 76.

The hymns in The Psalmist are of convenient length; most of them containing four, and some, but two or three verses. The preacher using this book, will seldom find it necessary to abridge a hymn,—a service always unpleasant to him, and disagreeable to the congregation. The variety of metres is good; we do not see how it could be improved.

As a specimen of book-manufacturing, The Psalmist is deserving of great praise. It is printed with beautiful type, on clear, white paper, is strongly bound, opens easily, and may be read with comfort, by old and young. It would be not less gratifying than advantageous for the churches of this country, could they unite in adopting the same hymn book for public worship.

The editors have accomplished a noble work, for which they deserve not only the thanks of our own churches, but of all lovers of true devotional psalmody.

From the Christian Reflector, Boston.

We have before referred to the new hymn book, entitled "The Psalmist." We have since given it a more careful examination, and we cannot withhold from it our unqualified praise. Winchell's Watts has a great many excellent hymns, and will, doubtless, continue to be used by many churches; but the volume contains many hymns that cannot be given out to be sung, with any propriety whatever; and these are in the way, and embarrass a minister in making his selections. We have other compilations in use which contain many of the best hymns extant. The Psalmist surpasses them all, in the select character of all its hymns. Not one can be regarded as inappropriate to public worship. The good old hymns are all there, and many most beautiful new ones. Those from the pen of S. F. Smith, are surpassingly excellent. The book is admirably arranged, neatly printed, and well bound. It cannot fail of becoming, sooner or later, the standard hymn book of the denomination. It is to be introduced into all parts of the United States.

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From the Christian Watchman, Boston.

This volume impresses us as being very complete. The editors seem to have been more solicitous to make a good book, than a new book. The reader will find that a majority of the pieces are such as have long been familiar to his ear in our devotional assemblies. We should have been sorry to have found it otherwise. The hymns of Dr. Watts take the lead. All his pieces are inserted which possess lyrical spirit, and are suited to a Christian assembly.

We need say nothing upon the need of a new hymn book. Had Winchell's Watts, which has now been in use in these parts nearly a quarter of a century, been made as perfect as it were possible at the time to make it, we should at this period need a new book.

From the Musical Visiter, Boston.

"The Psalmist," a new collection of Hymns, is just out, in a beautiful style, on good paper, and handsomely bound. It has four Indexes, one of the first lines, one general and one particular index of subjects, and a Scripture index. Having examined the book, we are satisfied that besides many more, it has three great excellences, viz., the hymns are generally short, having about four verses, very many three, and about as many of two as of six, and a few of five verses. Another excellence is, the variety of subjects, well adapted to these last days. Another is, the highly literary, and yet plain and beautiful style of the language. This is truly a literary gem, besides being a sweet 'Psalmist' for the church of Christ.

From the Christian Secretary, Hartford.

We are no great sticklers for changes and innovations in the church, by the introduction of new books, new instruments of music, &c., it having ever been more congenial to our taste to walk in the "old paths." We must say, that The Psalmist, just published, presents claims to the denomination not to be found in any other work of the kind. There is one merit in this hymn book which we are glad to find, viz., it is not divided into parts, as in the case with Winchell's Watts. Another is, that the hymns are of a suitable length for Divine worship, few of them exceeding six verses, and in most cases not exceeding four.

After a somewhat careful examination, we have been led to the conclusion, that this Hymn Book possesses qualities over every other of the kind that we are acquainted with, which entitle it to a place in every Baptist pulpit in the country.

From the Religious Herald, Richmond, Va.

It has evidently been compiled with much care, and comprises a sufficient variety of hymns for all the purposes of worship. The missionary department is very full, containing some original hymns, and others which have not heretofore appeared in our hymn books. Throughout the book, original compositions, with hymns not heretofore met with in our selections, and of modern origin, are interspersed with those long known and familiar to the public. The work deserves high praise for its purity of style and expression. It has great and deserved merit, and as a whole is not only well adapted to the object aimed at, but superior to its predecessors.

From the New York Baptist Register.

The Psalmist is one of the most delightful and complete books of the kind we ever had the privilege of examining. It is the very book wanted. The poetry is choice and beautiful, the sentiments are scriptural, expressed with peculiar felicity and force, and adapted to every variety of condition,—there is something for every body and every occasion. If it could be introduced into our churches, they could want nothing better.

From the Alabama Baptist.

This work is intended to be the Baptist Hymn Book; and, after a careful and critical examination, we are fully prepared to say, that it really deserves to be adopted as such, by the denomination. We think it decidedly superior to any collection of Psalms and Hymns ever before issued from the American press. The compilers, themselves, are men of the purest taste, refined by familiar converse with the most elegant writings of ancient and modern times, and sanctified by the influences of the Holy Spirit. We earnestly commend The Psalmist to the attention of pastors and churches. We believe it will be introduced into the churches throughout the United States. The preparation of this work may be regarded as the act of the entire denomination, and if it be universally adopted, will greatly tend to produce uniformity of doctrine, and church order and discipline, through all the churches.

From the Zion's Advocate, Portland, Me.

It is sometimes said, that editors are induced to commend books by the donation that is usually made to them of a copy of the work. But it cannot be so in this case, since we have, by some means, failed of receiving a copy. Yet we are willing to do the publishers a service, and our readers a greater service, by cordially recommending this to those who are purchasing new books. We do not know any other equal to it.

From Graham's Magazine, Philadelphia.

The Psalmist is, in our opinion, decidedly the best compilation of sacred lyric poetry ever published in this country. Its editors are distinguished clergymen of the Baptist church, and one of them is himself a poet of no mean reputation. Mr. Smith's Missionary Hymn, commencing, "Yes, my native land, I love thee," is nearly as well known as the celebrated lyric of Heber, "From Greenland's icy mountains," etc., and a large number of his pieces, on a variety of subjects, rank high among the best of their kind in the language.

From The Macedonian, Boston.

It has been prepared with the most critical regard to the laws of language and poetry, and to the wants of the church of the present age. It is designed for use throughout the United States, and was accordingly examined in the proof-sheets, by gentlemen of known ability and scholarship, in different parts of the country. We refer to it chiefly to express our gratification at the extensive and admirable collection of missionary hymns which it contains. One of these we select, entitled "The Missionary Angel," was written by Rev. S. F. Smith.

EXTRACT OF LETTERS FROM CLERGYMEN.

From Rev. Geo. B. Ide, Philadelphia.

At the risk of appearing intrusive, I have taken my pen to let you know the emotion which your new Hymn Book, in its beautiful dress, has excited in my mind. My expectations were very highly raised; but the result has more than answered them. Such another collection of hymns for public worship, so beautiful in its execution, so natural, clear, and perfect in its arrangement, so varied, copious, and appropriate in its list of subjects, so lyrical in its structure, so devotional in its spirit, so scriptural in its sentiments, so sweet, pure, and elevated in its poetry, I do not believe the world can furnish, and I am certain the English language cannot. It is a work, in every respect, of such surpassing excellence, as to leave nothing in its department to be desired. All here, who have seen it, are delighted with it. If there be any true taste in our churches, it must speedily come into universal use. Our own denomination, and the Christian public generally, are under great obligations to the gifted brethren who have so successfully performed their task, and to the liberal and enterprising publishers, by whom they were employed. You will, I am confident, receive an ample remuneration for all your expense and outlay. And I trust, that both you and they will enjoy the far higher, richer reward, of knowing that through your united labors, the public praises of God have been improved, chastened, and rendered more edifying and refreshing; and that, upon the return of each holy Sabbath, millions of saints on earth are chanting the hallowed and inspiring strains with which you have supplied them; and thus preparing to join the blissful choir and the eternal anthems of the upper sanctuary.

Philadelphia, June, 1843.

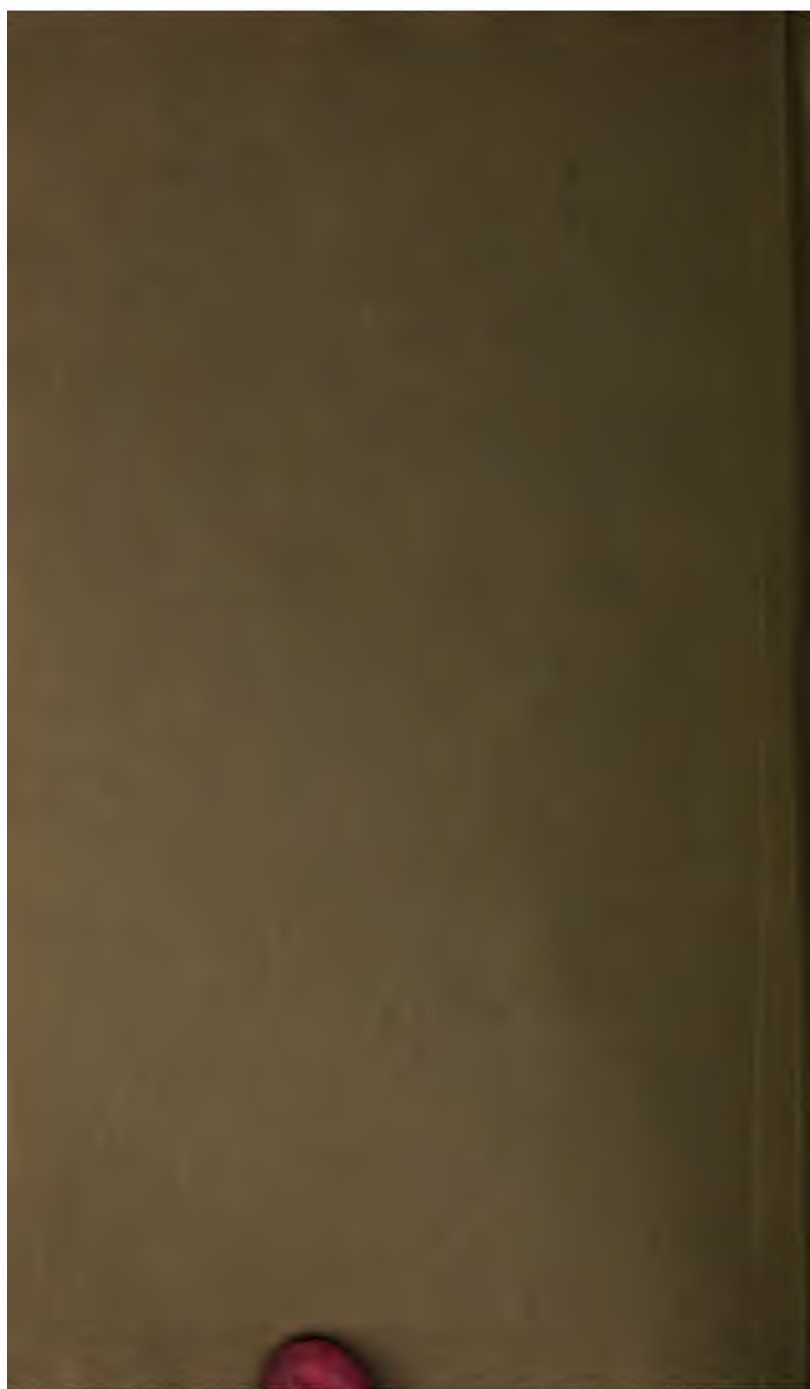
GEORGE B. IDE.

From Rev. John Dowling, Providence, R. I.

About six years ago, the lamented James D. Knowles, at the close of a valuable editorial article upon Church Psalmody, in the Christian Review, remarked as follows: "We repeat the expression of our hope, that the time may soon arrive, when a compilation shall be prepared, worthy, in its sentiments and poetical character, to be adopted by the Baptist denomination throughout this extended republic." Had this gifted brother lived to examine the Psalmist, I cannot doubt that he would have agreed with the writer of these remarks, that the present is just such a work, and that that hope is completely realized. If I were to enumerate the excellences by which The Psalmist is distinguished above every other hymn book with which I am acquainted, in use among the Baptist denomination, I should say, 1. There are no hymns, so far as I can discover, offensive to a correct taste, and most of them possess a high degree of poetic excellence. 2. Every hymn may be read with propriety from the pulpit. 3. All the hymns are adapted to be sung, being properly lyrical in their character, and not historical or didactic. 4. Most of the hymns are of a suitable length; the greater number consisting of not more than four verses. 5. The unmeaning division into psalms and hymns is avoided, and the numbering of the hymns is continuous, thus avoiding the difficulty sometimes experienced, especially by strangers, in finding the hymn that is announced.

J. DOWLING.





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